THE THREAT OF CONVERGENCE OF TERROR GROUPS WITH TRANSNATIONAL CRIMINAL ORGANIZATIONS IN ORDER TO UTILIZE EXISTING SMUGGLING ROUTES AND TECHNIQUES TO AID IN THE COVERT ENTRY OF OPERATIVES INTO THE UNITED STATES

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Homeland Security Studies

by

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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

ABSTRACT

THE THREAT OF CONVERGENCE OF TERROR GROUPS WITH TRANSNATIONAL CRIMINAL ORGANIZATIONS IN ORDER TO UTILIZE EXISTING SMUGGLING ROUTES AND TECHNIQUES TO AID IN THE COVERT ENTRY OF OPERATIVES INTO THE UNITED STATES, by John R. Modlin, Assistant Chief Patrol Agent, U.S. Border Patrol, 117 pages.

Transnational criminal organizations (TCOs) have profited from the smuggling of contraband into the United States since its existence. Terror groups have explicitly stated their intent to target the citizens, infrastructure, and economy of the United States. This thesis examined the major TCOs operating across the borders of the United States and the capabilities they possess and utilize. This thesis also examined terror groups that have proclaimed a desire to attack the homeland. As a methodology to analyze the likelihood of terror groups converging with TCOs to exploit existing smuggling infrastructure to enter operatives into the United States, a purposive survey was delivered to a group of subject matter experts in the areas of counter-terrorism, border security, and disruption of TCOs. The majority of these subject matter experts agreed that terror groups will converge with TCOs to enter the United States.

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provided me with an invaluable look into your world. I have made many lifelong friends

and I am a better person for having met all of you. I wish all of you the best. Be safe.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACRONYMS

DHS	Department of Homeland Security
DoD	Department of Defense
INS	Immigration and Naturalization Service
OAM	Office of Air and Marine
OFO	Office of Field Operations
PMESII	Political, Military, Economic, Social, Infrastructure, and Information
TCO	Transnational Criminal Organization
USBP	United States Border Patrol

ILLUSTRATIONS

TABLES

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Anyone who tries to destroy our villages and cities, then we are going to destroy their villages and cities. Anyone who steals our fortunes, then we must destroy their economy. Anyone who kills our civilians, then we are going to kill their civilians.

— Osama Bin Laden, *The Guardian*

Introduction

The United States of America and its interests abroad have been the target of terrorism throughout its history. After the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, the nation focused on the security of its borders and the existing vulnerabilities. Naturally, the ability for terrorists to exploit these vulnerabilities became a significant area of national interest. Will these terror groups exploit existing smuggling routes utilized by transnational criminal organizations (TCOs) to gain entry into the United States?

Primary Question

The primary question of this research study concerns the possibility that terror groups and foreign fighters will converge with TCOs in order to enable their entry across the borders and into the United States.

Secondary Questions

There are multiple subordinate questions to this thesis. What are the goals of the terrorists and the possible impacts if achieved? What are the goals and capabilities of the TCOs? Is a convergence of the TCOs and terrorists likely?

Background

The United States has recognized the need to secure its borders since its inception. The formal history of border security in the United States can be traced to the origins of the U.S. Customs Service on September 2, 1789. Initially, the responsibilities of the U.S. Customs Service were primarily the collection of tariffs and duties as prescribed by law (U.S. Customs and Border Protection 2014a). In 1891, the United States formalized the recognized need to administer immigration inspections as well of traditional customs inspections. The 1891 Immigration Act was the impetus for the formation of the Office of the Superintendent of Immigration in the Treasury Department. This agency was charged with permitting or denying entry of immigrants into the U.S. based on their admissibility. This agency would eventually become the United States Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) (U.S. Customs and Border Protection 2014b).

Both the INS and the U.S. Customs Service were primarily focused on traffic and enforcement at the official U.S. ports of entry. In 1924, the U.S. Border Patrol (USBP) was created as a solution to address the cross border criminal activity occurring between the official ports of entry into the United States In 1925, the purview of the USBP expanded to include the coasts of the United States as well as the contiguous borders with Mexico and Canada (U.S. Customs and Border Protection 2014c).

The roles and responsibilities of these three border security agencies remained primarily unchanged until the dissolution of the INS and the formation of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and Customs and Border Protection (CBP). In 2002, President George Bush published a proposal to create the Department of Homeland Security. This proposed department would inherit the mission of protecting the

homeland. Further, by connecting agencies that have convergent missions and

responsibilities, information and intelligence sharing would increase, as would the

capability to operate collectively towards common goals (U.S. President 2002, 3). In

November of 2002, the Homeland Security Act was codified in 6 U.S. Code 111. The

three primary missions of DHS are stated as:

1. Prevent terrorist attacks within the United States.

2. Reduce the vulnerability of the United States to terrorism.

3. Minimize the damage, and assist in the recovery, from terrorist attacks that do

occur in the United States.

DHS was created from twenty-two federal departments and agencies (U.S.

Congress 2002, 8).
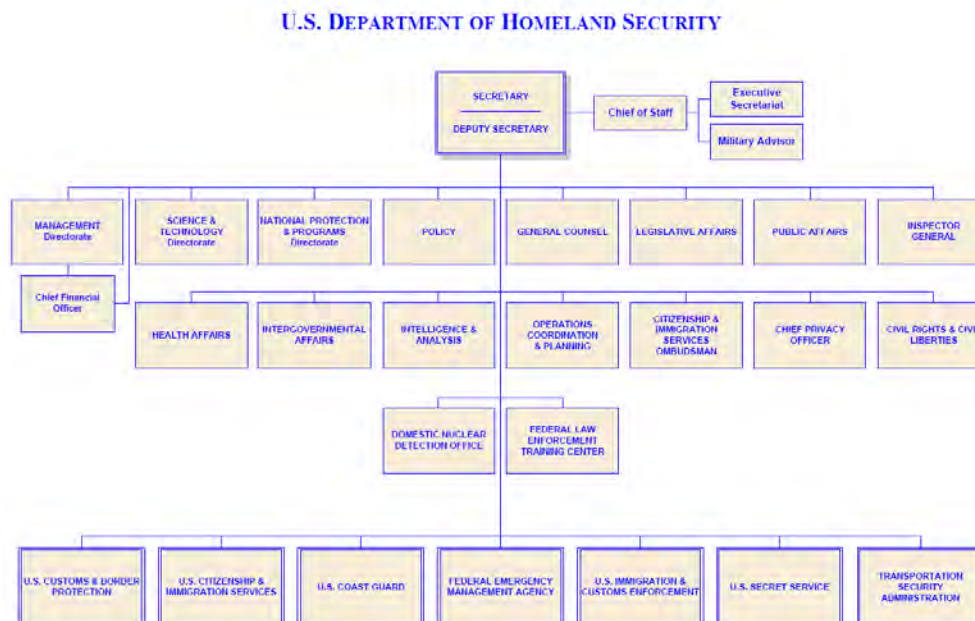
Figure 1.   DHS Organizational Chart

Source: Department of Homeland Security, "Organization Chart," accessed November
20, 1014, http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/dhs-orgchart.pdf.

CBP was one of the agencies that emerged because of the formation of DHS. CBP is a consolidated border security agency consisting of more than 60,000 employees. The mission of CBP is multidimensional. CBP is tasked with the prevention of the entry of terrorists and their weapons into the United States while facilitating lawful trade and travel (U.S. Customs and Border Protection 2014d).

The USBP, the Office of Field Operations (OFO), and the Office of Air and Marine (OAM) are the three component agencies within CBP that execute enforcement of the border security mission. The USBP is responsible for securing the border between the ports of entry into the United States. The USBP has approximately 22,000 agents that patrol the more than 6,000 miles of border with Canada and Mexico and the more than 2,000 coastal border miles including Florida and Puerto Rico. In fiscal year 2012, the USBP made more than 360,000 arrests, seized more than two million pounds of marijuana and more than 5,900 pounds of cocaine (U.S. Customs and Border Protection 2014e). The OAM is the largest maritime and aviation law enforcement agency in the world. OAM has more than 1,100 agents, more than 500 marine, and aviation assets. The mission of OAM is "to protect the American people and the nation's critical infrastructure through the coordinated use of integrated air and marine forces to detect, interdict and prevent acts of terrorism and the unlawful movement of people, illegal drugs and other contraband toward or across U.S. borders" (U.S. Customs and Border Protection 2013). The OFO has more than 22,000 CBP officers and agricultural specialists stationed at ports of entry throughout the United States and around the world. The primary mission of OFO is to secure the borders of the United States at the official

ports of entry while simultaneously ensuring the facilitation of trade and travel to legitimate visitors and cargo (Wikipedia 2014).
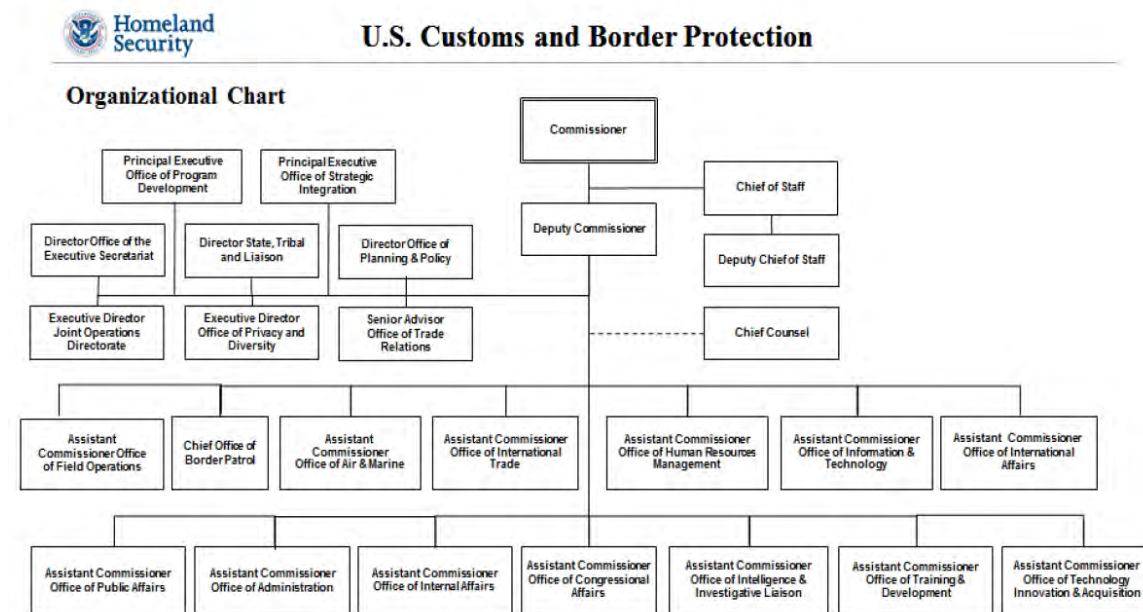
Figure 2.   CBP Organizational Chart

Source: U.S. Customs and Border Protection, "CBP Organizational Chart," Department of Homeland Security, accessed November 20, 2014, http://www.cbp.gov/sites/default/files/documents/CBP%20Org%20Chart%20Feb2014.pdf.

Assumptions

There are some assumptions that must be considered regarding this thesis. The first assumption is that the current national border security posture will not change in the near future. This includes the continued primary use of civil authorities on the U.S. borders. It is assumed that the DoD will not engage in primary enforcement activities along the borders of the United States. This does not exclude the expected limited use of

DoD such as in Operation Jumpstart where National Guard forces were employed primarily to assist and support USBP in their border security mission (Church 2009, 104-109). Another assumption is that the three DHS/CBP agencies with primacy of border security responsibilities will not radically alter in terms of capabilities, responsibilities, or policy. Another assumption is the current levels of cooperation between the contiguous bordering countries, Mexico and Canada, will not substantially alter. A further assumption is that the border security policies of these countries will also not change in the near term.

<div align="center">Definitions</div>

Many terms are used throughout this thesis. Several are defined below to aid the reader in understanding their use.

Human Trafficking: This is the exploitation of persons through coercion, deception, or fraud. In cases of human trafficking, persons are deceived into sexual or commercial exploitation instead of the lucrative opportunities that they were promised. Human trafficking is equivalent to modern day slavery (U.S. Department of Homeland Security 2014a).

Smuggling: Unlike human trafficking, smuggling is based on knowingly transporting persons, or contraband illegally into a country. In smuggling ventures, the smugglers are being paid to evade law enforcement efforts and the persons being smuggled have not been deceived or coerced (U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement 2013).

Special Interest Country: This is a term used by DHS and other federal agencies to describe countries that have a direct nexus to terrorism (Longmire 2011).

Terrorism: Section 2331, Title 18 of the U.S. Code (2013) defines terrorism as having all of the following characteristics: Violent acts against humans that are in violation of state of federal law, intended to coerce or intimidate a government or civilian population, and occurs primarily outside the territorial borders of the United States or they transcend international boundaries.

TCO: A criminal organization that operates transnationally in order to achieve influence, power, money, or commercial gain. These organizations employ violence or political corruption as a means to an end. Further, they exploit international boundaries in their illegal pursuits as a means to hinder law enforcement and maximize profitability (U.S. President 2011, 3).

Delimitations

This study will not assess the following related issues. Links between domestic terrorism and TCOs will not be explored. This study will not assess foreign terrorists that may exploit visas or the legal immigration system in order to gain access to the United States. Instead, it will primarily focus on foreign terror groups that would utilize existing TCOs in order to facilitate illegal entry into the United States between the official ports of entry.

This research is significant in relation to understanding if these two entities, TCOs and terror groups, with divergent interests will enter into a symbiotic relationship to achieve their disparate goals. The consequences of terrorists slipping undetected into the United States via the existing smuggling networks utilized by the TCOs could be catastrophic.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

> I therefore determine that significant TCOs constitute an unusual and
> extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the
> United States, and hereby declare a national emergency to deal with that threat.
> — President Barack Obama, Executive Order 13581,
> Blocking Property of Transnational Criminal Organizations

To understand the threat posed by the convergence of TCOs and terror groups, some historical background must be examined. Border security in the United States formally began on May 28, 1924 when Congress passed the Labor Appropriation Act of 1924, which officially established the USBP. In the ninety years since, the border security interest of the United States which is reflected in the mission of the USBP has evolved from primarily an immigration and contraband enforcement focus to an all threats focus.

TCOs

The thesis will examine the major TCOs affecting the United States and their capabilities. From the high profile and often-violent Mexican cartels such as Los Zetas and the Gulf Cartel to more subtle groups such as the Chinese Snakehead. The examination will focus on the tactics, techniques, and procedures employed in their trade.

TCOs are difficult to define. In the *Strategy to Combat Transnational Organized Crime*, TCOs are defined as, "A criminal organization that operates transnationally in order to achieve influence, power, money, or commercial gain. These organizations employ violence or political corruption as a means to an end. Further, they exploit international boundaries in their illegal pursuits as a means to hinder law enforcement and maximize profitability" (U.S. President 2011, 3).

Due to the economic disparity between Mexico and the United States, differing views on immigration and volume of cross border illegal activity, TCOs that operate in this environment will be the primary focus of this section. These TCOs in Mexico have been engaged in an escalating, brutal war of violence over the past decade. From 2006 until 2012, more than 47,500 people have died due to the drug violence in Mexico (Chalk 2012, 5). To put this in perspective, in the Global War on Terror, U.S. war casualties since 2001 are 6,824. This includes hostile and non-hostile deaths in Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom, and Operation New Dawn (Defense Casualty Analysis System 2014).

Currently, there are seven significant drug cartels operating in Mexico and exploiting the southern U.S. border for illicit gains. These cartels have morphed and evolved over the last decade due to cooperative agreements with rival cartels, leader assassinations, and imprisonment. There is no reason to believe that these groups will not continue to develop and merge and their ultimate goal and mission will remain.

The Gulf Cartel is headquartered in Matamoros, Tamaulipas, directly across the border from Brownsville, Texas. This cartel has existed since the 1970s but has recently suffered a loss in prominence and power due to the secession of its enforcers, Los Zetas, in 2007. The Gulf Cartel has attempted to famously defend itself from Los Zetas by creating narco-tanks from heavy-duty trucks. These tanks are outfitted with steel plating and are impervious to small arms fire. Anti-tank weapons are employed by rival cartels against these behemoths (Chalk 2012, 5).

As stated, Los Zetas seceded from the Gulf Cartel and formed an independent cartel. Ex-members of the Mexican military special forces created Los Zetas in the late

1990s. Until its secession, Los Zetas, served as paramilitary enforces for the Gulf Cartel. Los Zetas are considered to be among the most violent cartels in Mexico and one of the most prolific in terms of geographic acquisition (Chalk 2012, 6).

The La Familia Cartel was first recognized in 2006. This cartel emerged with a stated purpose and mission of helping the citizenry of Mexico and ensuring regional security. Initially, its members were required to carry Christian religious materials; however, it soon evolved into a cartel known for brutal decapitations and executions. Recently, La Familia Cartel has begun to decline due to members splintering into an emerging group known as Caballeros Templarios or Knights Templar (Chalk 2012, 6).

The Sinaloa Cartel was founded in the mid-1990s and has become the most powerful and influential cartel in Mexico. The cartel is named for the state in which it was founded, Sinaloa, Mexico. The cartel leader is thought to have acquired more than one billion dollars through nefarious activities relating to cross border criminal activity. The Sinaloa Cartel has been known to utilize underground tunnels to smuggling narcotics into the United States (Chalk 2012, 6, 7).

The Beltran Leyva Cartel was named for four brothers that began the organization in the state of Sinaloa in the 1960s. This cartel was an ally of the Sinaloa Cartel until 2008 when it severed ties. Since the separation, the cartel has been hindered by executions of its leaders and arrests of prominent members. Recently, the cartel has forged alliances with Los Zetas and the Juarez Cartel (Chalk 2012, 7).

The Juarez Cartel, also known as the Carillo Fuentes Syndicate, is based in Cuidad Juarez, Mexico. Cuidad Juarez is located on the border with the United States directly across the Rio Grande from El Paso, Texas. In August 2011, authorities captured

a Juarez Cartel enforcer. Since his capture, he has admitted to ordering the killing of more than 1,500 people and has claimed to be the planner behind the killing of a U.S. consulate employee. At the height of its power, the Juarez Cartel is alleged to have earned more than $200,000,000.00 a week smuggling narcotics into the United States (Chalk 2012, 7).

The final Mexican cartel to be examined is the Arellano Felix Organization, also known as the Tijuana Cartel. This cartel was once held as the most violent of the drug cartels in Mexico. Like other cartels, recent years have seen its power and influence diminished through the capture and killing of its leaders. The Arellano Felix Cartel primarily controls the state of Baja California in Mexico.

Another group of TCOs that are heavily involved in smuggling persons into the United States is the Chinese Snakeheads. Migrants pay the snakeheads in order to be smuggled from China to the United States or other destinations. These smuggling ventures are complicated and often involve bribing public officials, and moving through many countries before arriving at the final destination. Snakeheads have representatives in China, the pass-through countries, and in Chinese population centers in the United States. The snakeheads generally prefer maritime routes as their primary method for facilitation of smuggling humans into the United States (Federal Research Division 2003, 5-32).

<div align="center">Capabilities of TCOs</div>

TCOs have refined their methodologies for smuggling into the United States for as long as there have been borders. Over time, these methodologies have become more

complex and more creative. Aside from the typical guiding of groups of people across the borders, tunnels and cloned vehicles are appearing with great frequency.

The Office of Inspector General has reported that underground tunnels that originate outside the United States and terminate within the United States are a significant and increasing threat to border security. More than 140 of these cross-border tunnels have been located since 1990. There has been an 80 percent increase in the discovery of these tunnels since 2008 (Office of Inspector General 2012, 1).

These cross-border tunnels can range from crudely designed rudimentary means of bypassing above ground border security defenses to intricate subterranean corridors. In 2013, officials discovered an extremely sophisticated tunnel near San Diego, California. This tunnel originated in an industrial center in Tijuana, Mexico and terminated near the Otay Mesa port of entry. This tunnel was thirty feet below the surface and had electricity powering ventilation, lighting, and a rail system. Officials seized more than 17,000 pounds of marijuana and more than 300 pounds of cocaine when the tunnel was discovered (Harris 2014, 44).

Figure 3.   Subterranean Tunnel under U.S./Mexico Border

Source: Kamala D. Harris, Attorney General, California, *Gangs Beyond Borders: California and the Fight Against Transnational Organized Crime* (Sacramento, CA: State of California, 2014), 44.

The Office of Inspector General categorizes cross-border tunnels into three distinct groups: rudimentary, interconnecting, and sophisticated. Rudimentary tunnels are characterized as crudely constructed and only cross a small distance. These tunnels often generate sinkholes or ground collapses and are therefore easiest to detect. Interconnecting tunnels are dug into the earth and at some point connect to existing infrastructure. In most cases, these tunnels will connect to water runoff and sewer systems on the U.S. side of the border. These tunnels exploit the existing infrastructure in order to complete the goal of avoiding border security efforts. Sophisticated tunnels are deep tunnels that cover greater distances. These tunnels often have electricity, shoring to prevent collapse, ventilation, and a cargo moving apparatus. As of December 2010, only 16 percent of the discovered cross-border tunnels were classified as rudimentary. The remaining 84 percent

were classified as being evenly divided between interconnecting and sophisticated. The overwhelming majority of these tunnels are found crossing from Mexico into California and Arizona (Office of Inspector General 2012, 2-4).

Another capability that TCOs utilize to defeat border security is cloned vehicles. A cloned vehicle is made to closely represent the original. TCOs have postulated that a vehicle believed to be legitimately used by commercial or civic groups is less likely to face scrutiny by border security efforts. Cloned vehicles have been created to mimic ambulances, school buses, delivery trucks, and even USBP service vehicles. In the case of a cloned USBP transport van, it was likely only uncovered due to Border Patrol agents recognizing that the numerical designation on the exterior of the van did not coincide with the agency designation for that type of vehicle. When stopped, the vehicle contained more than thirty people that had crossed the border illegally (Transportation Security Operations Center 2009, 1-7). These vehicles are not only designed to create less suspicion near the border, but could potentially be utilized to gain access to secured areas (Transportation Security Operations Center 2009, 10).

Figure 4.   Cloned USBP Van

Source: Transportation Security Operations Center, *Cloned Vehicles: More than Meets the Eye* (Washington, DC: Department of Homeland Security, 2009), 7.

Terror Groups

The literature review will examine terror groups with stated missions and goals of harm to the United States. This will have significant depth and breadth to fully investigate the potential impact of these actors. A review of historical incidents of lone operatives and small group attacks in the United States and the rest of the world will be conducted.

Terrorism is difficult to define. Most people know and recognize an act of terror immediately upon seeing or hearing of it. However, defining it is more problematic. Section 2331, Title 18 of the U.S. Code (2013) defines terrorism as having all of the following characteristics: Violent acts against humans that are in violation of state of federal law, intended to coerce or intimidate a government or civilian population, and occurs primarily outside the territorial borders of the United States or they transcend international boundaries.

Osama Bin Laden established Al-Qa'ida in 1988. The U.S. Department of State designated it as a Foreign Terrorist Organization in 1999. The goal of Al-Qa'ida is to remove western influence from the Muslim world and establish an Islamic caliphate. In 1996, Al-Qa'ida declared war against the United States and stated that all Muslims have a duty to kill United States citizens and military personnel (Bureau of Counterterrorism 2014, 302-303). Al-Qa'ida has affiliates throughout the world that follow its mandates, leverage its global reach, and engage in mutual support.

The U.S. Department of State designated Al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula as a Foreign Terrorist Organization in 2010. This affiliate retains the same goals as Al-Qa'ida and has attempted. It has attempted to achieve them through targeting of persons and infrastructure inside and outside of the Arabian Peninsula (Bureau of Counterterrorism 2014, 303). In a 2014 hearing before the Senate Committee on Homeland Security, Matthew G. Olsen, Director of the National Terrorism Center stated, "Al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula remains the affiliate most likely to attempt transnational attacks against the United States." This Al-Qa'ida affiliate has attempted numerous high profile plots against the United States since 2009. In addition, this affiliate is responsible for the

publishing of *Inspire*, the English language magazine of Al-Qa'ida. This magazine targets disenfranchised youth and lone wolf operators in order to teach them methods and techniques to carry out terror attacks (Olsen 2014, 5).

In 2004, the U.S. Department of State designated Al-Qa'ida in Iraq as a Foreign Terrorist Organization. This faction also seeks to remove western influence and military power from the Islamic World. In 2006, this faction rebranded itself as the Islamic State of Iraq. Recently it changed its name to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, commonly referred to as ISIL or ISIS (Bureau of Counterterrorism 2014, 304-305). Of significant concern is that the current iteration of this faction has had increasing influence over western citizens that have been motivated to travel to conflict areas and fight alongside these terrorists. In doing so, these "foreign fighters" become further radicalized, receive combat experience, and meanwhile retain the ability to travel with relative ease back to their countries of origin (Bureau of Counterterrorism 2014, 73). This type of scenario in which citizens are radicalized and trained and retain the capability to return to their country of origin is a significant concern to the United States. If these individuals are on watchlists, they are likely to utilize established smugglers to regain entry to the United States.

<u>Attacks</u>

Although the coordinated attacks of September 11, 2001 are the seminal terror events in the minds of most Americans, much less sophisticated attacks can be accomplished with one or two operatives. The Boston Marathon bombing, the attacks on the Canadian Parliament and the Fort Hood shooting are evidence of the impact that can

be achieved without significant resources and coordination. In each case, a lone wolf or small group committed significant acts of terror.

On April 15, 2013, a pair of homemade bombs were detonated near the finish line of the Boston Marathon. The resulting explosions claimed the lives of three people and injured more than 250 others. It was determined that the bombs were constructed from pressure cookers packed with nails and other debris to act as shrapnel and cause additional casualties. Two immigrant brothers, Dzhokhar and Tamerlan Tsarnaev are accused of committing the bombings. These bothers, ethnically Chechen, immigrated with their family to the United States in 2002. The investigation revealed that their radicalization began in 2009. It is believed that they drew inspiration and technical knowledge of the construction of the pressure cooker bombs from a do-it-yourself article published in *Inspire* magazine (Ray 2014).

In 2009, U.S. Army Major Nidal Hassan opened fire in Fort Hood, Texas and killed thirteen people and wounded more than thirty others. Hassan specifically targeted soldiers and civilians at a processing center for those preparing to deploy to Afghanistan. Hassan had been in contact with an Al-Qa'ida leader via e-mail prior to the attack. A military court convicted Hassan and subsequently sentenced him to death for the killings (Kenber 2013).

In 2008, a small group of terrorists illegally entered India via small craft and enacted sixty-two hours of terror in the city of Mumbai. In the course of those hours, these ten terrorists had killed more than 160 people and wreaked havoc on the city. The attackers targeted hotels, cinemas, cafes, and nightclubs using explosives and automatic weapons (Kronstdat 2008, 1-2). Phone intercepts during the attack demonstrated that the

terrorist actions were being orchestrated from a source outside of India. The terrorists appeared to have very little training or education, instead receiving orders telephonically (Reed 2009).

In September of 2004, terrorists attacked the elementary school in Beslan, Russia. During the seizure of the school, the terrorists held 1,300 people. The terror group consisted of approximately thirty men and two women. When the attacks concluded after three days, more than 344 civilians, mostly children were dead along with eleven Russian soldiers (Uschan 2006, 1-11). This attack was another example of the impact that small terror groups can achieve with limited weapons.

<u>Inspiration</u>

For operatives intent on travelling to the United States to carry out acts of terror, learning techniques, tactics, and procedures is a simple as reading an online magazine. *Inspire* magazine was first released in the summer of 2010. Since then, there have been numerous issues and a compendium of articles entitled, *Lone Mujahid Pocketbook*. The pocketbook explicitly details low cost, low tech ways of creating terror. Included are articles on how to start forest fires, create pressure cooker bombs, cause vehicle accidents on highways, and which vehicles are best for running down large crowds of people. The magazine also offers detailed instructions on the making of Acetone Peroxide, a powerful explosive, marksmanship instruction for the Kalashnikov rifle, sending and receiving encrypted messages electronically, and creating remote control detonation devices from easily acquired goods (Al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula 2013, 2-60).
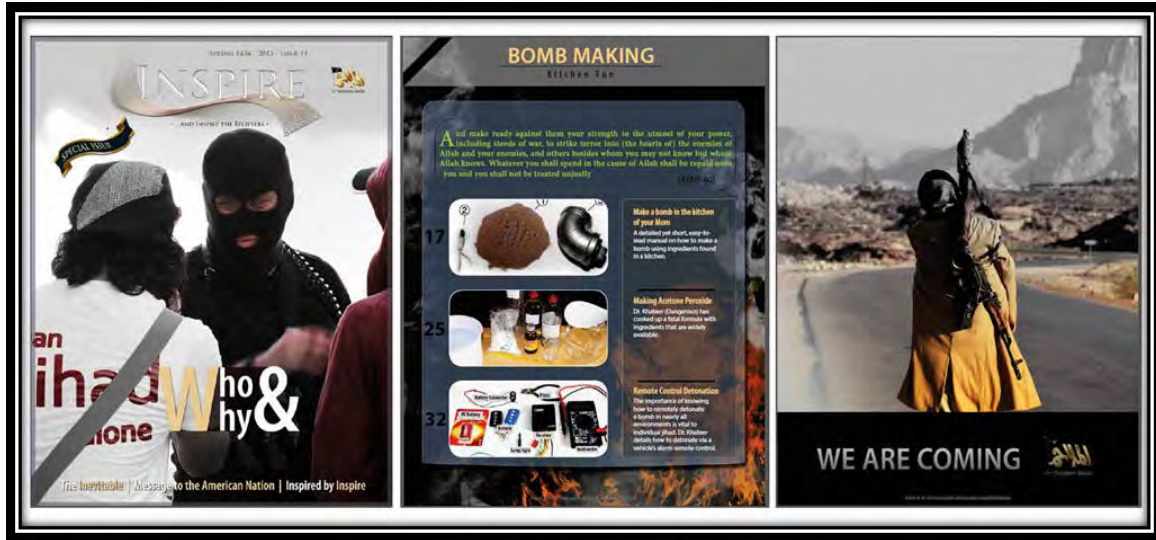
Figure 5.   *Inspire* Magazine

Source: Compiled by author using photos from Al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula, 2013, "Easy and Safe Irhab," *Lone Mujahid Pocketbook,* 1343 (Spring 2013): 16, 63.

Convergence

Will these capabilities of the TCOs combined with the fervor of terror groups create for a perfect storm of catastrophic results or will destructive goals of the terror groups conflict with the symbiotic nature of the TCOs and the United States? The convergence of TCOs and terror organizations is documented throughout the world. Examples of this convergence appear when one or both groups need a capability of the other.

Al-Qa'ida released a video in which they stated their intention to utilize drug smuggling tunnels that exist under the southwestern U.S. border in order to transport biological weapons into the United States. In the video, the narrator explains that a single

fighter using these tunnels can carry a suitcase with Anthrax and disperse it into a large city. The narrator claims that such an attack could result in more than 300,000 American casualties (*The Washington Times* 2009). Although the claim of the potential death toll and the difficulty in weaponing Anthrax is not addressed, the fact that Al-Qa'ida has considered the use of existing TCO networks is evident.

The 2004 Madrid train bombings are an example of the convergence of terror groups and criminal networks. In the case of these bombers, they utilized criminal networks to completely fund their terrorist operation without any financial assistance. The attack was executed on March 11, 2004 when ten bombs were detonated on four trains carrying commuters into Madrid, Spain. The attack killed 191 people and injured 1,800 more. In this case, an international drug dealer who was radicalized in prison conspired with an aspirational terrorist in order to plan and fund the attack. The plan was financed using the proceeds from the illicit narcotics trade. The group exchanged hashish for explosives with a Muslim convert living in northern Spain. In this case, the group's involvement with narcotics was beneficial in keeping their terror activities unnoticed. It is suspected that they were viewed by authorities as drug dealers and not radicals with potential to cause significant damage to the country (Rollins and Wyler 2010, 19-20).

The Taliban is another example of a terror group that leverages criminal organizations in order to achieve its goals. Involvement in the narcotics trade is a significant source of revenue for the Taliban. It is estimated that 98 percent of Afghanistan's opium is under control of the Taliban. It is estimated that the Taliban earns up to 100 million dollars annually from this. The Taliban provides security to the facilities where the drugs are processed and secures the transportation lines for the

precursor chemicals that are shipped into Afghanistan from other nations. For its assistance, the Taliban receives money and weapons from the drug cartels. The Taliban also assists the drug traffickers in their fight against Afghan security and police forces (Rollins and Wyler 2010, 20-22).

In certain cases of convergence, terrorist groups have sought facilitators amongst criminal elements to accomplish their goals. In the case of Abu Ghadiyah, a known smuggler of humans along the Iraq-Syrian border, entered into an arrangement with terror groups in order to smuggle operatives, weapons, and other goods into Iraq. Ghadiyah was named as Al-Qa'ida in Iraq's Syrian commander in logistics due to his ability to facilitate smuggling, and provide safe houses, passports, weapons, and money to the organization. In the case of Ghadiyah, he shared the same ideology as the terrorists that he aided and eventually joined (Rollins and Wyler 2010, 23).

In other cases, similar ideologies are not required. In fact, monetary gain is occasionally the only factor that encourages the convergence of TCOs and terrorism. In 2007, Monzer Al Kasser, a citizen of Syria, and an international arms dealer was arrested for providing explosives to the terror groups Hezbollah and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Columbia. Similarly, in 2008, Viktor Bout, a Russian national was arrested in Thailand where he was making final preparations to complete an arms deal with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Columbia. Bout was to provide the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Columbia with more than 700 surface to air missiles, 5,000 rifles, and explosives. It is also suspected that Bout transported arms illegally to Al Qa-ida and the Taliban. In both cases, these heads of international criminal organizations were motivated to converge with terror groups simply to increase revenue (Rollins and Wyler 2010, 24).

<u>Conclusion</u>

This chapter examined the literature currently available regarding TCOs and terror groups. Specifically, the intent, previous attacks, and inspiration of terror groups was examined. The literature regarding the most prolific and active TCOs that are operating across the borders of the United States was examined. The capabilities and motivations of the TCOs were also examined, as were historical instances of convergence between TCOs and terror groups. There is a significant amount of literature on these entities, TCOs, and terror groups; however, literature regarding convergence of the two is limited. The next chapters will describe the research methodology, a modified Delphi research survey study, and its subsequent results regarding the potential convergence of these groups.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

> Terrorist organizations could seek to leverage those same smuggling
> routes to move operatives with intent to cause grave harm to our citizens or even
> quite easily bring weapons of mass destruction into the United States.
> — General John F. Kelly, Commander U.S. Southern Command, *Posture
> Statement Before the 113th Congress House Armed Services Committee*

This chapter frames the process in which the research methodology was chosen,

explains the origin and history of the methodology, and describes how it will be

implemented in this thesis. This chapter also describes the rationale utilized in the

determination of identifying subject matter experts to participate in the study. This

research will assist in answering the primary research question: will terrorists and foreign

fighters converge with TCOs to utilize existing smuggling routes and methods to

facilitate their covert entry into the United States? This thesis has examined the foreign-

based terror groups that have expressed intent to harm the United States. This thesis has

also studied the TCOs that operate across the borders of the United States to

surreptitiously smuggle people, narcotics, weapons, money, and other contraband into the

country. The capabilities and methodologies of these TCOs were also examined. The

thesis then studied terror attacks within and outside the United States. Finally, the thesis

examined examples of the convergence of TCOs and terror groups in the past and the

reasons that they occurred.

Survey Method

To best answer the research question a survey methodology was used in

conjunction with principles of the Delphi method to increase the value of the findings.

Utilization of a survey as a methodology for conducting research has many advantages. Principally, a survey is a relatively quick and uncomplicated manner to collect information from a targeted group of participants (Beins 2009, 104). The survey was conducted online in order to minimize data entry errors and thereby enhance the overall validity of the study. Prior research has demonstrated that respondents provide more detail when completing online surveys as opposed to manually administered surveys. Online surveys also offer the participant a level of anonymity that is not perceived in manual surveys. Further, utilization of an online survey negates the need for all participants and the administrator to be physically present in the same location (Ritter and Sue 2007, 7).

<center>Delphi Method</center>

Due to the nature of the primary and secondary research questions, this study necessitates a predictive methodology. However, simple study of past events and likely paths of evolution are not sufficient to forecast the likelihood of the convergence. The knowledge of the workings, motivations, and capabilities, of terror groups and TCOs is constantly evolving. Subject matter experts in the areas of terrorism, TCOs, and border security are constantly adding to their knowledge base regarding these entities. Therefore, incorporating a principle of a Delphi study is most appropriate and beneficial to accurately forecast the answer to the research and accompanying questions. Further, the adaptability and flexibility in utilization and execution make the Delphi method well suited for this type of research.

The Delphi method was first used in the 1950s by researchers with the Rand Corporation. The purpose of the research was to assist the U.S. Air Force answer

<center>25</center>

questions relating to national defense and future technologies (Custer, Scarcella and Stewart 1999). Similar to the legendary oracles in Delphi from which the methodology derives its name, the purpose of this methodology is to produce a future forecast.

Delphi utilizes a multi-step method to arrive at the prediction of a group of subject matter experts. Historically, the Delphi method contains four significant features. First, the subject matter experts remain anonymous and their individual responses are not provided to the researcher. This anonymity avoids researcher influence and prevents dominant group members from unduly influencing others. Second, after the survey, the participants are provided with the aggregate results prior to the subsequent survey rounds. This methodology provides the participants with insight as to how other experts view the same issues. The third feature is that the participants have the opportunity to adjust their responses based on the results of the other participants. The fourth feature is that the methodology provides the statistical group aggregate, which is analyzed and interpreted (Skulmoski and Hartmann 2007, 3).

The Delphi method works best when it is adapted to the unique situation posed by the research problem. This is characterized by the variances in the numbers of participants, the number of survey rounds, and other variables. Usually, two or three rounds of surveys are sufficient. Past research has indicated that as the number of survey rounds increase, the response rate from participants decreases (Skulmoski and Hartmann 2007, 11). Based on this information, the research study in this thesis is to be conducted in one survey round. The number of participants is also significant and can vary depending on many factors. The more homogenous the participants, the smaller the participant group necessary. If a group of significantly different participants were

selected, such as persons from various cultures or countries, a much larger group would be needed (Skulmoski and Hartmann 2007, 10). Due to the homogenous nature of the group of participants in the study, there will be twenty-two subject matter experts participating.

<u>Participants</u>

The researcher chose the participants in this study due to their expertise in one or a combination of the following areas: terrorism, TCOs, and border security. The participants are currently employed or retired from agencies with mandates of border security, countering terrorism, disruption of TCOs, or intelligence. The participants are from federal law enforcement agencies and the DoD.

The distribution of a survey to a group of participants selected due to a common variable is known as purposive sampling. This nonrandom technique exploits the expert knowledge of a particular group as opposed to a sampling from a random group that likely has little or no expertise in the relevant area. The drawback of this methodology is that it relies on the judgement of the researcher (Beins 2009, 130-131).

<u>Confidentiality</u>

Confidentiality is critical in survey research. Participants must understand that the answers they provide are appropriately utilized and that there is no connection between the individual response and the respondent (Fink 2009, 44). The researcher contacted the participants only via e-mail to inform them that they had been selected to participate in the research survey. Utilizing Allegiance Survey Builder, the participants received an e-mail with an embedded link to the study. When activated, the link provided the

participants with questions generated by the researcher and approved by the staff of the

U.S. Army Command and General Staff College. The survey program Allegiance Survey

Builder compiled the results and returned them to the college staff. The researcher did not

have access to individual responses tied to particular participants. Instead, the staff

provided the researcher with the aggregate results void of participant names or other

identifying information. This methodology ensured strict anonymity of the participants

and their responses. It also provided anonymity between the participants. The participants

were never aware of who the other participants were. There were no incentives or

promises of compensation made to the participants. Each survey began with an informed

consent statement, which complied with the Protection of Human Subjects guidelines

found in the U.S. Code of Federal Regulations. These guidelines include the presentation

of the title of the survey, the purpose, the confidentiality, the identification of the

surveyor, and the knowledge that the participant can withdraw at any time (Fink 2009,

45).

<u>Surveys</u>

Survey questions can be broad or narrow depending on the intent of the research.

Open-ended broad questions allow for a wide range of disparate answers. Narrow, more

focused questions assist in focusing the collective intelligence and experience of the

participants towards the specific research question (Skulmoski and Hartmann 2007, 10).

Three factors guided the creation of the survey questions. The factors were brevity,

without bias, and relevance. Each question was reviewed to ensure that it complied with

these guidelines. Ensuring compliance with these guidelines most effectively ensured that

the participants were answering the intended question and that only significant questions were asked (Ritter and Sue 2007, 30).

There are four types of questions utilized in research survey. The question types are factual, behavioral, attitudinal, and demographic. The survey employed in this thesis contained multiple questions of each type. Factual questions require the participant to respond with specific information based on their knowledge and experience. These are generally True or False and Yes or No questions. Behavioral questions concern the habits of the participants. These questions appear as measure of actions. Such questions appear as, How often do you . . . or something similar. Attitudinal questions seek to expose the participants' feelings about a certain statement. To assess the degree of agreement or disagreement, a scale of answers is employed. The scale will generally vary from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree responses. Demographic questions quantify the background and expertise of the participants. In many surveys, these questions demonstrate the age, gender, race, religion, income level, or other demographic of the participants. In this study, the demographic questions determined the participants' level of expertise and vocational relevance to the research questions (Ritter and Sue 2007, 31-32).

Surveys contain two formats for responses, open-ended and close-ended questions. Both response formats have positive and negative attributes. The survey employed in this thesis utilized both open-ended and close-ended questions.

Open-ended questions allow the participant to express their answer through a provided text box. Open-ended questions allow the participant to explain an opinion in detail. The participant is not artificially constrained by the terminology selected by the

survey designer. However, open-ended questions require more of the participants' time.

Therefore, open-ended questions were used sparingly to avoid participant fatigue (Ritter

and Sue 2007, 35-36).

Close-ended questions consist of multiple choice, rating scales, and rankings. The

multiple-choice questions must contain answers that are mutually exclusive to avoid

participants from choosing between ambiguous answers. The rating scales capture the

participants' feelings toward a certain statement. These appeared in the attitudinal

questions. In a ranking scale, participants order options by preference (Ritter and Sue

2007, 33-35). This type of question did not appear in this research survey.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS

> The relationship between terrorists and organized criminals will remain primarily a matter of business, i.e., that terrorists will turn to criminals who can provide forged documents, smuggled weapons or clandestine travel assistance where the terrorists cannot procure these goods and services on their own.
> — National Intelligence Council, *Mapping the Global Future*

This chapter presents the data collected from the research survey employed to assist in answering the primary research question: will terrorists and foreign fighters converge with TCOs to utilize existing smuggling routes and methods to facilitate their covert entry into the United States? The chapter begins with a demographic description of the participants based on their area of expertise, time in their profession, and other significant factors. The chapter then examines the survey and the questions asked of the participants. Finally, the chapter analyzes and summarizes the results and their relevancy to the research questions. The survey is presented in its entirety in Appendix A.

Participants

The researcher selected the participants in this study for their expertise in one or a combination of the following specialties: terrorism, TCOs, and border security. As described in chapter 3, selection of participants with specific expertise is a critical factor in both Delphi studies and survey research. In survey research, this methodology is known as purposive sampling (Beins 2009, 130-131).At the time of the survey, the participants were employed or retired from agencies with mandates of border security, counter-terrorism, disruption of TCOs, or intelligence. The participants were from federal law enforcement agencies and the DoD. Participants were selected from the USBP, Drug

Enforcement Administration, Diplomatic Security Service, CBP OFO, Immigration and Customs Enforcement Homeland Security Investigations, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The participants from the DoD included Intelligence Officers and Special Forces operators. Surveys were provided for twenty-two identified subject matter experts for this study. The surveys were delivered via the Allegiance survey program. Seventeen of the twenty-two surveys were completed and returned. The surveys were available to the participants from March 13, 2015 to March 23, 2015. Each participant received a reminder to complete the survey after seven days if it was not already completed.

Education level was determined to be a crucial factor in the selection of the participants. Of the sixteen respondents to the survey, three have a Ph.D., thirteen have a bachelors or masters degree, and one did not respond to the question. In the general population of the United States in 2009, approximately 39 percent of the population over twenty-five years of age completed a bachelors degree or higher (United States Census Bureau 2010). Therefore, the participant group in the study possess a significantly higher level of education than in the population at large. This is significant and correlates to the likelihood that the participants understood the questions and purpose of the survey. Furthermore, sixteen of the seventeen participants engage in independent learning regarding terrorism, border security, or TCOs. Of the sixteen participants that engage in relevant independent learning, the majority do it on a weekly basis. The participant group has been proven educated and continues to self-educate with study in areas relevant to the research.

Fifteen of the participants identified their primary professional focus to be on terrorism. Twelve of the participants identified TCOs to be their primary professional

focus. Seven of the participants identified border security as their principal professional focus. One participant failed to respond to the question. This collective group of participants, although not evenly divided amongst the identified specialties, is significantly diverse.

The participants represented a substantial number of years in their respective professions. Data collected from all seventeen participants demonstrated that in total, they possess at minimum a combined 291 years of professional expertise. The actual number is likely higher, however, the estimate was reached through the sum of the lowest numbers on the given ranges for each respondent. On average, each participant has approximately seventeen years in his or her profession. Nearly 60 percent of the participants indicated that they oversee personnel that perform functions related to counter-terrorism, border security, or disruption of TCOs.

The participants were carefully selected for this study in order to leverage their expertise in relevant areas. As demonstrated by the responses to the introductory demographic questions, as a group, they have completed more education than the average American. Further, they have an average of more than seventeen years in their profession. In addition, more than half of the participants supervise personnel that perform tasks related to border security, counter-terrorism, or disruption of TCOs. The group of participants in this research study was expertly qualified to provide opinions and experiences related to the research question.

<center>Operational Environment</center>

In order to understand the operational environment, Army planners utilize a framework that incorporates evaluation of the following interrelated domains: Political,

Military, Economic, Social, Infrastructure, and Information (PMESII) (Headquarters,

Department of the Army 2012, 1-2). This research study utilized the framework of

PMESII with minor modifications to ensure its relevance to the research question.

Although not indicated in the survey, the questions were constructed utilizing a modified

PMESII framework in order to investigate the research problem holistically, accounting

for as many of the domains as possible.

To evaluate the political domain, the survey asked the participants if terror groups

outside the United States demonstrate intent to attack the homeland. The participants all

indicated that terror groups demonstrate intent to attack the homeland. All the

participants provided short statements to explain their answer. Most participants

referenced open source statements from terror groups that have indicated clear intent to

attack the United States. This concurrence amongst the participants is critical for

validation of the foundational framework of the research question. If terror groups did not

intend to attack the homeland, subsequent questions regarding capabilities and

convergence would be unnecessary. A complete list of all the statements provided by the

participants is located in Appendix B.

In the economic domain, the survey asked the participants if money is a sufficient

incentive for TCOs to assist terror groups in entering the United States illegally. In this

case, the overwhelming majority of the participants believed that money is enough

incentive for the TCOs to collude with terror groups. With a concurrence of 94 percent

amongst the participants, it can be concluded that monetary incentive is sufficient for the

convergence of these groups to occur. This convergence would be consistent with the

historical cases of Monzer Al Kasser and Viktor Bout referenced in chapter 2.

34

To evaluate the social domain, the survey asked participants if terror groups and TCOs needed to share the same ideology to work together. As detailed in chapter 2, terror groups and TCOs have extremely dissimilar goals. TCOs operate with the end goal of maximizing profits for the organization (U.S. President 2011, 3). As defined in Section 2331, Title 18 of the U.S. Code (2013), terror groups conduct their nefarious operations with the goal of intimidation or coercion of a population or government. Although these two groups often utilize similar means to achieve their goals, their desired ends are significantly different. All of the survey participants unanimously declared that terror groups and TCOs do not need to share the same ideology in order to work together.

The infrastructure domain is significant to examine in order to determine if terror groups can surreptitiously enter the United States to conduct attacks against the homeland. The survey presented multiple questions to the participants regarding infrastructure. To determine if the foundational criminal networks exist to facilitate smuggling, the survey asked participants if TCOs are operating across the borders of the United States. All of the participants indicated that TCOs are operating across our borders. This survey question allowed participants to explain their answers. A participant referenced maritime narcotics smuggling from South America that culminates with the contraband being smuggled across the southwest border of the United States. Another participant responded, "Transnational criminal organizations operate across the borders in a variety of ways, whether through smuggling of persons, contraband, narcotics, etc. or through trade based money laundering operations that support criminal and terrorist organizations" (USACGSC Survey 15-03-033 2015). The entirety of the responses to the survey is located in Appendix B.

In a related question, the survey asked participants to select which of the following, if any, do TCO have the ability to smuggle undetected into the United States: People, Weapons, Narcotics, Money, and or Other Contraband. All of the participants indicated that all of the options could be smuggled undetected into the United States. No participants indicated that none of the choices could not be smuggled into the United States. Eleven of the participants also selected the Other Contraband option and provided examples of other things that they believe could be smuggled successfully into the United States. These responses included, "Explosives, nuclear material/components to build WMD, and money laundering" (USACGSC Survey 15-03-033 2015).

In a related infrastructure question, the survey asked participants if terror groups have the capability to enter the United States without the cooperation of TCOs. The survey participants overwhelmingly responded that terror groups have the capability to enter the United States without the cooperation of TCOs. Only 6 percent of the participants indicated that terror groups do not have the capability to enter the United States undetected without the cooperation of TCOs. Many of the participants stated that because people cross the border undetected on a daily basis, logic dictates that terror groups could do the same. For example, one participant stated, "People cross the US border undetected on a regular basis. There is no reason to believe a terrorist could not do the same" (USACGSC Survey 15-03-033 2015). However, many of the participants caveated their replies with a statement that they believed the terror groups would utilize the capabilities of the TCOs in order to increase their likelihood of success in crossing the border undetected. For example, "Terror groups are able to enter the U.S. without TCO

cooperation, though TCO might facilitate terrorist group crossings and make them less vulnerable to detection and interdiction" (USACGSC Survey 15-03-033 2015).

The survey did not directly address the information domain as it relates to TCOs and terror groups. A survey examination of the intelligence and information sharing of the TCOs and terror groups would likely have yielded sensitive or classified information and therefore was not pursued. However, the survey examined the information domain relative to the organizations that have the responsibilities to counter TCOs and terror groups. To explore the information domain of the PMESII framework as it relates to the convergence of terror groups and TCOs, survey questions focused on intelligence sharing and collaboration between the relevant agencies with counter-terror, border security, or a disruption of TCOs mandate. The survey asked participants if intelligence is shared across all relevant agencies to secure the homeland. Seventy-six percent of the participants indicated that intelligence is shared across the relevant agencies. Twenty-four percent of the participants believed that intelligence is not shared across the relevant agencies to secure the homeland. The participants explained their answers and often referenced groups such as the Joint Terrorism Task Force led by the Federal Bureau of Investigation as a model for information and intelligence sharing amongst the agencies. It is significant that more than a decade after the terror attacks on September 11, 2001, almost a quarter of the participants responded that information is not shared. *The 9/11 Commission Report* identified that information sharing amongst government agencies needed to improve (Kean 2006, 394). The report details the many obstacles to information sharing that existed leading up to the attacks. These obstacles included individual and agency decisions not to share information (Kean 2006, 416-417). To this

point, one survey participant noted that, "In my opinion, there is still a culture of holding onto intelligence developed within a particular organization; they developed it . . . they don't want to share the information or their sources" (USACGSC Survey 15-03-033 2015). In 2011, the DHS published a report regarding its progress on the recommendations of *the 9/11 Commission Report*. The report titled, *Implementing 9/11 Commission Recommendations* documents the improvements made to information sharing since the inception of DHS. The report cites improvements such as the opening of seventy fusion centers, the National Terrorism Advisory System, and other initiatives (U.S. Department of Homeland Security 2011, 3-4). None of the survey participants cited fusion centers or the National Terrorism Advisory System in their responses.

Another question asked in the information domain was, how could the intelligence sharing process be improved? This question was open-ended and provided the participant with a text box for a short answer. The entirety of responses to this question are in Appendix B. Commonly recurring themes amongst the responses included the re-evaluation of existing inter-agency agreements regarding intelligence/information sharing, expanding partnerships with foreign law enforcement, enhanced distillation of classified intelligence into actionable information for operators, increased sharing of intelligence acquired by DoD sources outside the United States with agencies within the homeland.

Another information related survey question asked the participants how often they collaborate with agencies with the primary responsibilities of counter-terrorism, border security, or disruption of TCOs. Significantly, in regards to terrorism, all of the participants indicated that they collaborate daily, weekly, monthly, or quarterly. None of

the participants responded that they never or only annually collaborate with agencies with a focus on terrorism. Conversely, 18 percent of the participants responded that they never collaborate with agencies with a border security focus and 6 percent indicated that they did so annually. Analysis of the responses within the belt of Daily to Quarterly reveals a statistically significant gap in collaboration between these primary functions. In this belt, the other agencies collaborate with counter-terrorism agencies at a rate of 91 percent. The other agencies collaborate with TCO agencies at a rate of 77 percent. The other agencies collaborate with border security agencies at a rate of 65 percent. That represents a 26 percent delta between the rates of collaboration with counter-terrorism groups and border security groups. This is arguably the most significant revelation of the survey. Table 1 illustrates the responses.

Table 1.   Collaboration

	N/A	Never	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Quarterly	Annually	Total Responses
Terrorism	1	0	5	4	4	3	0	17
	6%	0%	29%	24%	24%	18%	0%	
Border Security	2	3	6	3	1	1	1	17
	12%	18%	35%	18%	6%	6%	6%	
Transnational Criminal Organizations	1	1	6	3	2	2	2	17
	6%	6%	35%	18%	12%	12%	12%	
Total Responses	4	4	17	10	7	6	3	51

Source: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Survey 15-030-033, "Survey Sumary Report," Fort Leavenworth, KS, March 24, 2015, 13.

A measurement outside of the PMESII framework examined by the survey was the potential disparity between knowledge and training in the areas of terrorism, border

security, and TCOs. The survey asked the participants to indicate their level of knowledge in the areas of terrorism, border security, and TCOs. The survey presented his question as a close-ended rating scale in which responses ranged from No Knowledge to Expert knowledge. Table 2 illustrates the results.

Table 2.   Participant Knowledge Level

	No knowledge	Some knowledge	Moderate Knowledge	Extensive Knowledge	Expert Knowledge	Total Responses
Terrorism	0	0	5	7	5	17
	0%	0%	29%	41%	29%	
Border Security	1	5	2	7	2	17
	6%	29%	12%	41%	12%	
Transnational Criminal Organizations	0	4	3	9	1	17
	0%	24%	18%	53%	6%	
Total Responses	1	9	10	23	8	51

Source: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Survey 15-030-033, "Survey Sumary Report," Fort Leavenworth, KS, March 24, 2015, 13.

An analysis of these responses in horizontal belts revealed statistically significant variations between the three functions. The first two columns, No Knowledge and Some Knowledge reveal that none of the participants selected these in response to terrorism. However, 24 and 35 percent of the participants selected these responses for TCOs and border security, respectively. Therefore, 100 percent of the participants describe their

knowledge of terrorism between Moderate to Expert whereas only 65 percent describe themselves as having Moderate to Expert knowledge of border security.

A similar level of disparity amongst the participants was discovered in their reported training regarding terrorism, border security, and TCOs. The survey asked the participants if they received training in these areas. Ninety-four percent of the participants reported that they had received training regarding terrorism. Eighty-two percent of the participants reported that they had received training regarding TCOs. Fifty-eight percent of the participants reported that they had received training regarding border security. Figure 6 illustrates the disparity of training reported by the participants amongst the three functional areas of terrorism, border security, and TCOs.
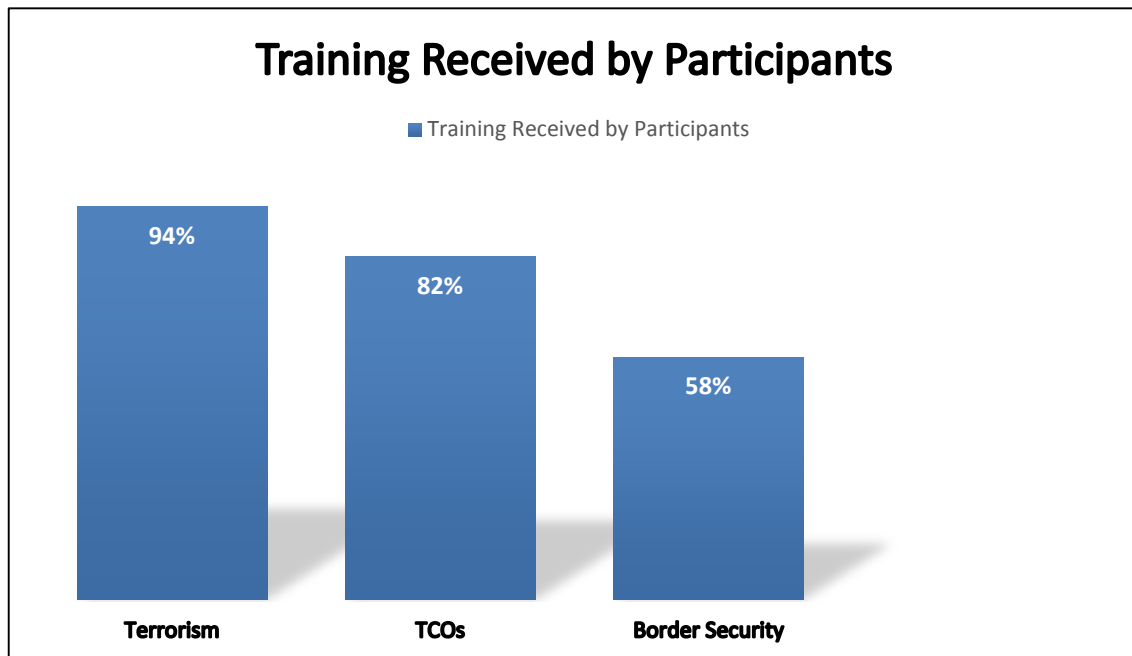

Figure 6.   Training Received by Participants

Source: Created by author using data from U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Survey 15-030-033, "Survey Sumary Report," Fort Leavenworth, KS, March 24, 2015, 5-10.

In a methodology similar to a Delphi study, the survey asked the participants to answer the research question. The participants were asked to rate the likelihood that terror groups will utilize TCOs to facilitate the covert entry of operatives into the United States. Ninety-four percent of the participants indicated that it was Somewhat Likely or Very Likely that this convergence would take place in order for terror groups to enter the United States. The single participant that indicated it was Not Very Likely for the groups to converge stated that the terror groups do not trust TCOs. Further, the participant stated that the violent acts that terrorists engage in could negatively affect the profits and strategic goals of the TCOs.

The survey concluded with an open-ended question that asked the participants how to mitigate the possibility of a convergence of TCOs and terror groups. The participants provided a varied array of responses in short answer format. The highest percentage of respondents stated that increased intelligence and information sharing are critical to mitigate the convergence. A significant number of participants also responded that increased border security measures could mitigate the convergence. One of these participants proposed the use of DoD assets to assist in border security. Participants also responded that the most effective way to mitigate the convergence is to act multi-nationally. Examples of this included greater foreign presence by DHS/CBP assets in the Bahamas and Mexico, and to leverage multinational efforts and partnerships to stop the threats before they reach our borders. Finally, some participants responded that education amongst law enforcement and investigators concerning the links between TCOs, border security, and terror groups are necessary to mitigate the convergence.

Summary

This chapter presented the results of the survey conducted to further the research in the study of the convergence of TCOs and terror groups. The survey utilized the methodology of purposive sampling in order to gain the most value of the combined knowledge of the selected subject matter experts in the fields of counter-terrorism, border security, and the disruption of TCOs. These experts averaged over seventeen years of experience in their respective professions. The survey results were analyzed to determine common perceptions within this select group of participants and to glean the wisdom of their hundreds of years of combined experience in protecting the United States.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

America is a great power possessed of tremendous military might and a wide ranging economy, but all this is built on an unstable foundation which can be targeted, with special attention to its obvious weak spots. If America is hit in one hundredth of these weak spots, God willing, it will stumble, wither away and relinquish world leadership.

— Osama Bin Laden, quoted in *The Psychology of Radicalization and Deradicalization:How Significance Quest Impacts Violent Extremism*

Introduction

The purpose of this research was to study the possibility of a convergence between terror groups and TCOs in order to exploit existing smuggling networks to allow for the covert entry of operatives into the United States. The research was relative to the TCOs that operate across the borders of the United States and terror groups that have stated intent to attack the homeland. The research examined the capabilities of these TCOs in smuggling contraband into the United States. The research also studied the destructive capability of small groups of terrorists. Historical examples of the convergence of terror groups and TCOs were examined.

This chapter presents conclusions based on the findings of the research survey conducted and described in the previous two chapters. This chapter also provides an interpretation of the significance of the findings. Finally, this chapter presents recommendations for further study in order to examine areas that are outside the limitations of this thesis.

Chapter 4 analyzed the results of the research survey that was completed by a group of participants comprised of subject matter experts in the areas of counter-

terrorism, border security, and the disruption of TCOs. The survey results answered the research question and related inquiries. It also provided educated insight into the status of information sharing between agencies and recommended courses of action to mitigate the danger presented by the risk of TCOs and terror groups working together.

<u>Interpretation of Findings</u>

Chapter 4 of this thesis provided a detailed analysis of the results of the research survey conducted with the participating group of subject matter experts. The purpose of this section is to interpret those results and relate them to the body of knowledge reviewed in chapter 2. This correlation will demonstrate the danger to the United States if these groups converge. The research survey referenced in this chapter is contained in its entirety in Appendix A. The results of the participants are contained in their entirety in Appendix B.

All of the participants responded that terror groups outside the United States show intent to attack the homeland. This unanimous acknowledgement is foundational to the entirety of the survey and the thesis. Void of this, there is no value in the research. Further, most of these participants acknowledged open-source statements of intent from these terror organizations. U.S. Army and joint doctrine describe "ends, ways, and means" as a construct to understand the Center of Gravity of friendly or enemy forces. Colonel Dale Eikmeier described "ends" as a desired outcome, "ways" as actions that are expressed as verbs, and "means" as requirements and resources (Eikmeier 2007, 62). These attacks on the homeland are the expressed ends to the terror groups. The means of the terror groups will be the financial compensation to the TCOs. The ways will be the

utilization of the existing smuggling infrastructure to enter undetected into the United States.

More than 94 percent of the participants indicated that financial gain was a sufficient reason for TCOs to cooperate with terror groups. This insight is critical to gain an understanding of the motivations of the TCOs. Further, this demonstrated that the terror groups could utilize the TCOs and their infrastructure to gain covert access to the United States. Similar to the question of intent, this is foundationally critical to the entirety of the thesis and accompanying research. This financial incentive is the means, while the smuggling infrastructure of the TCOs is the ways. Chapter 2 examined a few of the ways in which the TCOs currently operate across the borders of the United States. These methods, such as subterranean tunnels, could potentially be utilized by terror groups to enter the United States.

Of the participants in the survey, 94 percent indicated that it was Somewhat Likely or Very Likely that terror groups would utilize TCOs and their existing smuggling capabilities as a means to accomplish their goal of entering the United States. Succinctly, this answers the research question of this thesis. It is the consensus of the relevant subject matter experts that participated in the survey that terror groups and TCOs will likely converge. If these groups that exist to profit from the smuggling of people and contraband across the borders of the United States are convinced to aid in the entry of operatives into the homeland, the consequences could be catastrophic. Chapter 2 demonstrated that terror groups could cause significant destruction, loss of life, and economic impact with small groups of operatives. The terror attack on Mumbai, India which killed more than 160 people was carried out by a small group of terrorists

(Kronstdat 2008, 1-2). Similarly, the attack on the elementary school in Beslan, Russia was conducted by a small group of terrorists. In this attack, more than 340 people were killed, mostly children (Uschan 2006, 1-11). A small group of terrorists could conduct attacks similar to these and kill hundreds, destroy critical infrastructure, and damage the economy.

However, perhaps more importantly, the survey revealed significant issues outside the research question, but relative to the subject matter. The survey revealed an issue relative to the manner in which information is shared between agencies. The disparity in training and knowledge of the three interconnected areas of expertise was analyzed to be of concern. Finally, the participants provided suggestions as to the manner in which the convergence could best be mitigated.

A disturbing revelation of the survey concerned information sharing between agencies that share a responsibility to protect the homeland. Nearly a quarter of the participants indicated that information is not adequately shared. This is despite the decade that has passed since the September 11, 2001 terror attacks and the subsequent findings of the *9/11 Commission* (Kean 2006, 394, 416-417). Although participants stated reasons such as organizational cultures and proprietorship of information as reasons that sharing does not occur, the research and analysis has revealed a potentially more significant obstacle to sharing.

The most significant revelation of the research and the most unexpected concerned the lack of connectivity between the three disciplines of counter-terrorism, border security, and disruption of TCOs. This lack of connectivity is exemplified in the responses related to frequency of collaboration between the agencies. All of the

participants responded that they collaborate with counter-terrorism agencies at least quarterly. Eighteen percent of the participants responded that they never collaborate with border security agencies. An additional 6 percent of participants indicated that they only collaborate with border security agencies annually. Given that 94 percent of the participants in the survey, all subject matter experts, agreed that terrorists would converge with TCOs in order to avoid detection upon entering the United States, it reveals a significant vulnerability to the security of the homeland if these three functional areas of interest are not collaborating on a regular basis.

The research revealed an equally notable symptom of the systemic failure to recognize the interconnectivity of the three functional areas, counter-terrorism, border security, and disruption of TCOs. This is evident in the participant responses related to knowledge and training. Participants were asked about their knowledge of terrorism, border security, and TCOs. The participants selected responses from No Knowledge to Expert Knowledge. None of the participants selected No Knowledge or Some Knowledge in relation to terrorism. Superficially, this appears to be the successful culmination of a post-9/11 decade wherein the danger of terrorism has been realized. However, the same participants rated their knowledge of border security and TCOs substantially lower. Relative to knowledge regarding TCOs, 24 percent of the participants selected No Knowledge or Some Knowledge. Relative to knowledge regarding border security, 35 percent of the participants selected No Knowledge or Some Knowledge. An alternate view of this disparity from the Moderate Knowledge to Expert Knowledge responses revealed that all of the participants rated their knowledge of terrorism in the moderate to expert range. Only 65 percent of the participants indicated the same level of knowledge

concerning border security. Seventy-seven percent of the participants indicated moderate to expert knowledge of TCOs. Therefore, the greatest delta of knowledge exists between the areas of border security and terrorism. Although the selected group of participants in this study was numerically significant, further study is warranted across larger groups of subject matter experts to determine if this delta is systemic or singularly attributable to this specific group of participants. A delta in knowledge of this magnitude between two of the three areas of expertise is indicative of the inequity placed on the subjects.

The final and largest delta recorded by the participants is found in the training received by them regarding terrorism, border security, and TCOs. Ninety-four percent of the participants received training regarding terrorism while only 58 percent of the participants received training regarding border security. Eighty-two percent of the participants received training regarding TCOs. Therefore, 36 percent of the participants have not received training regarding border security.

These significant deltas in knowledge, training, and collaboration reveal a systemic flaw in the effort to prevent terror groups from entering the United States. As noted, the goal of terror groups to attack the United States and their methodology to execute that goal can be viewed in the same manner as the Center of Gravity model. Therefore, based on this approach, the participants, all subject matter experts, do not possess a statistically significant focus on the ways of the terror groups. The lack of collaboration with border security agencies, and the lack of knowledge and training regarding border security indicate that a holistic approach to defeating the ways of the terror groups is not being undertaken.

<center>Mitigation</center>

The survey asked the participants to provide a short answer regarding methods to mitigate the convergence of TCOs and terror groups. The complete responses to this question can be found in Appendix B. Intelligence and information sharing amongst the agencies was the most frequently cited methodology to mitigate this convergence. Other responses included increased collaboration through task forces and increasing the presence of CBP personnel oversees. Without question, intelligence sharing and task force participation have increased since 9/11. Whether or not this increase has achieved the point of diminishing returns is unclear. However, the disparity between the focus areas is clear. In order to properly mitigate this threat, a holistic approach is necessary. Agencies must be knowledgeable and trained in all of the three focus areas: terrorism, border security, and TCOs.

<center>Recommendations</center>

This thesis and research survey revealed areas that indicate the need for further study. The completion of the research survey revealed some of these areas. Others were a product of the limitations and constraints of the thesis.

The most obvious area that warranted further research is the understanding of the delta between the collaboration, knowledge, and training regarding the three focus areas of terrorism, border security, and disruption of TCOs. Recognizing that border security was consistently at the low end of collaboration, knowledge and training, while conversely terrorism consistently remained at the top is significant. Therefore, a further research question could be asked to determine why border security consistently ranked low in these groups. Is border security viewed as less important in the effort to combat

terror groups intent on attacking the United States? Is there an inextricable link between border security and immigration that causes other agencies to become predisposed to failing to recognize the connection between border security and terrorism?

Another area for further study is the potential for increased DoD involvement as it relates to terrorism in the homeland, border security, and the disruption of TCOs. The DoD has participated in border security missions such as Operation Jump Start in 2006. Operation Jump Start was a joint operation between National Guard troops and the USBP with the mission of securing the southwest border of the United States (Doubler 2008, 1-2). Operation Jump Start recorded significant seizures, allowed USBP agents to focus on enforcement duties, and resulted in the apprehension of more than 170,000 subjects (Doubler 2008, 66). An increase in operations such as Jump Start could assist in securing the border while simultaneously affecting the profits of the TCOs.

<u>Summary and Conclusions</u>

This thesis demonstrated through literature review that terror organizations intend to attack the homeland. Further, it demonstrated through historical examples that small groups of relatively untrained terrorists can cause significant numbers of casualties and damage. The attacks on Beslan and Mumbai were provided to illustrate this. The major TCOs and their capabilities were also examined. These TCOs operate daily across the borders of the United States, smuggling contraband into and out of the country. Terror groups converging with TCOs in order to leverage their capabilities would allow them covert entry into the United States.

The research survey demonstrated that seventeen purposively selected subject matter experts in the areas of counter-terrorism, TCOs, and border security agreed on

three significant points. First, they agreed that terror groups intend to attack the homeland. The vast majority also agreed that that financial incentive is sufficient for TCOs to smuggle terrorists into the United States. Finally, they agreed that terror groups and TCOs are likely to converge in order to facilitate the covert entry of operatives into the United States.

The intent of terror groups to attack the United States is clear and indisputable. The ability to enter the United States covertly using the same routes and infrastructure that are successfully utilized by TCOs daily has been proven. If the research participants, subject matter experts, are correct in their application of a cumulative total of hundreds of years of professional experience, training, and education, the convergence of terror groups and TCOs is likely to occur.

SURVEY CONTROL NUMBER 15-03-033

Convergence of Terrorists and Transnational Criminal Organizations.

Thank you for your support and participation.

Please click the "Finish" button at the bottom to submit your responses.

Page 12 | Back | Finish | Save | POWERED BY ALLEGIANCE

Convergence of Terrorists and Transnational Criminal Organizations.

This survey seeks your opinion on the possibility of terror groups converging with transnational criminal organizations. It also meets the research requirement for my Master of Military Arts and Science Degree.

This survey is voluntary and confidential and will take approximately 15-25 minutes to complete.

For content questions or concerns regarding the survey, please contact John R. Modlin, john.r.modlin@cbp.dhs.gov.

For Human Protections concerns, contact Dr. Maria Clark, the Human Protections Administrator, at maria.l.clark.civ@mail.mil

This survey has been reviewed and approved by the Quality Assurance Office. The survey control number is 15-03-033.

Page 1 | Next | Save | POWERED BY ALLEGIANCE

Convergence of Terrorists and Transnational Criminal Organizations.

What is your highest level of education?

- High School
- Associate's Degree
- Bachelor's Degree
- Master's Degree
- Ph.D.

Select all below that reflect your professional experience.

- ☐ Terrorism (prevention, investigation, research, etc.)
- ☐ Transnational Criminal Organizations
- ☐ Border Security

How many years have you been in your profession?

- 1-10 years
- 11-15 years
- 16-19 years
- 20+ years

Page 2 ▾ | Back | Next | Save

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Convergence of Terrorists and Transnational Criminal Organizations.

Have you received training regarding terrorism ?

- Yes
- No

How often do you receive training regarding terrorism ?

- Never
- Weekly
- Monthly
- Quarterly
- Annually

Have you received training regarding transnational criminal organizations?

- Yes
- No

Page 3 | Back | Next | Save

POWERED BY
ALLEGIANCE

Convergence of Terrorists and Transnational Criminal Organizations.

How often do you receive training regarding transnational criminal organizations?

- ● Never
- ● Weekly
- ● Monthly
- ● Annually

Have you received training regarding border security?

- ● Yes
- ● No

How often do you receive training regarding border security?

- ● Never
- ● Weekly
- ● Monthly
- ● Annually

Page 4 ⌄ | Back | Next | Save

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ALLEGIANCE

Convergence of Terrorists and Transnational Criminal Organizations.

Do you supervise personnel involved in work regarding terrorism, transnational criminal organizations, or border security?

- Yes
- No

How often do you engage in independent learning regarding terrorism, transnational criminal organizations, or border security?

- Never
- Weekly
- Monthly
- Quarterly
- Annually

Page 5 ⌄ | Back | Next | Save

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ALLEGIANCE

Convergence of Terrorists and Transnational Criminal Organizations.

Indicate your level of knowledge in each area.	No knowledge	Some knowledge	Moderate Knowledge	Extensive Knowledge	Expert Knowledge
Terrorism	●	●	●	●	●
Border Security	●	●	●	●	●
Transnational Criminal Organizations	●	●	●	●	●

Do terror groups outside the US demonstrate intent to attack the US homeland?

- ⦿ Yes
- ● No

You stated yes, please explain.

Page 6 ⌄   Back   Next   Save   ■■■■■□□□□□

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ALLEGIANCE

Convergence of Terrorists and Transnational Criminal Organizations.

Are transnational criminal organizations operating across US borders?

○ Yes
● No

You stated yes, please explain.

Convergence of Terrorists and Transnational Criminal Organizations.

Which of the following do transnational criminal organizations have the ability to smuggle undetected into the United States?
Please select all that apply.

- ☐ None
- ☐ People
- ☐ Weapons
- ☐ Narcotics
- ☐ Money
- ☐ Other Contraband

Do terror groups have the capability to enter the United States undetected without the cooperation of transnational criminal organizations?

- ◉ Yes
- ○ No

Please explain.

Page 8 ▾ | Back | Next | Save

■■■■■■■□□□

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ALLEGIANCE

60

Convergence of Terrorists and Transnational Criminal Organizations.

Will transnational criminal organizations avoid collusion with terror groups to prevent additional scrutiny from law enforcement agencies?

- ● Yes
- ○ No

Do terror groups and transnational criminal organizations need to share the same ideology to work together?

- ● Yes
- ○ No

Is monetary incentive sufficient for transnational criminal organizations to assist terror groups to enter the US illegally?

- ○ Yes
- ● No

Page 9 | Back | Next | Save

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ALLEGIANCE

61

Convergence of Terrorists and Transnational Criminal Organizations.

Is intelligence shared across all relevant agencies (terrorism, border security, and transnational) to secure the homeland?

You indicated Intelligence is not shared. Please explain.

- ● Yes
- ○ No

How can the intelligence sharing process be improved?

How often do you collaborate with agencies regarding the below primary responsibilities? (Select all that apply)	N/A	Never	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Quarterly	Annually
Terrorism	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Border Security	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Transnational Criminal Organizations	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Convergence of Terrorists and Transnational Criminal Organizations.

What is the likelihood that terror groups will utilize transnational criminal organizations to facilitate the covert entry of operatives into the US?

- ⦿ Not Very Likely
- ⦾ Somewhat Likely
- ⦾ Very Likely

Please explain.

How could the possibility of the convergence of transnational criminal organizations and terror groups be mitigated?

This box is provided for any additional information or comments you would like to share:
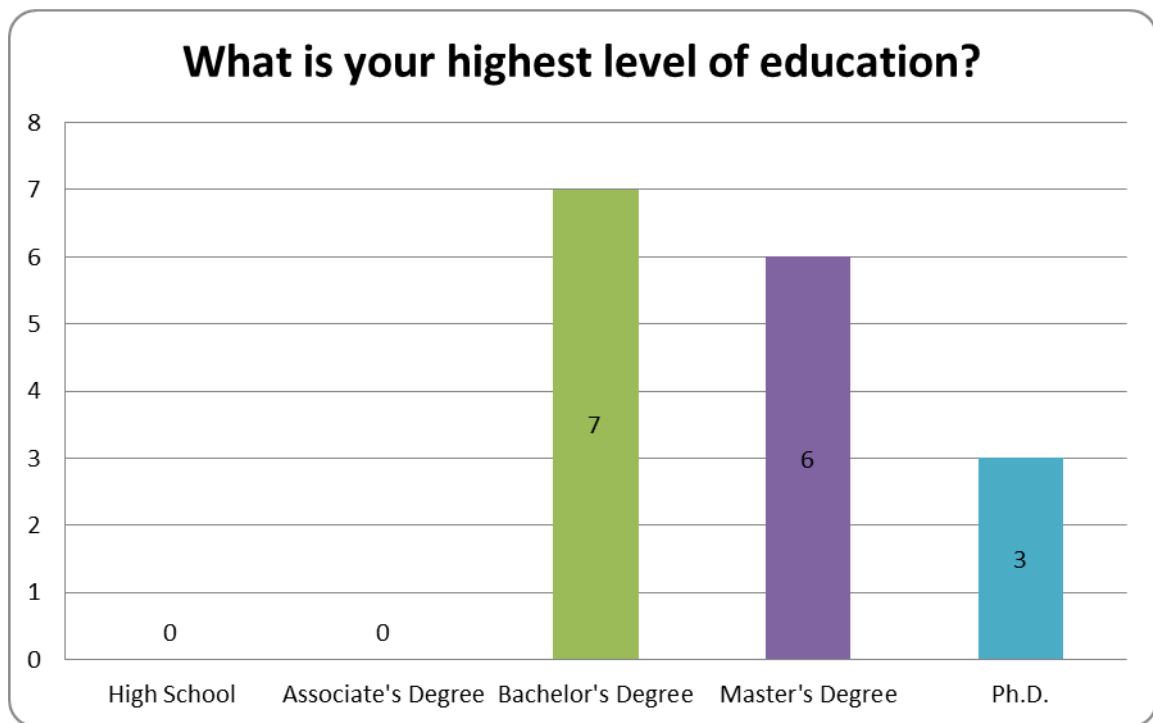
APPENDIX B

SURVEY SUMMARY REPORT

Tuesday, March 24, 2015

17 / 22 responses

What is your highest level of education?
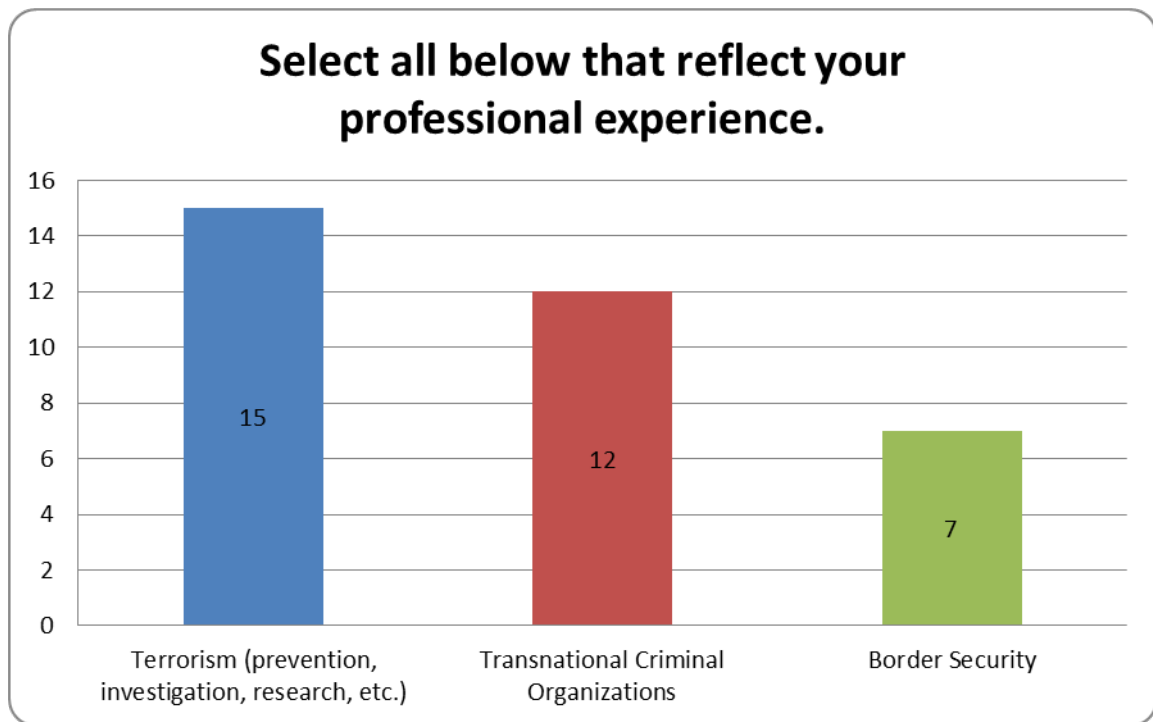**Response Rate: 94% (N=16)** **Question Type: Choose one**

High School	**0**
Associate's Degree	**0**
Bachelor's Degree	**7**
Master's Degree	**6**
Ph.D.	**3**
Total Responses	**16**

Select all below that reflect your professional experience.

Terrorism (prevention, investigation, research, etc.)	**15**
Transnational Criminal Organizations	**12**
Border Security	**7**
Total Responses	**34**

How many years have you been in your profession?
Response Rate: 100% (N=17) **Question Type: Choose one**

1-10 years	**1**
11-15 years	**2**
16-19 years	**3**
20+ years	**11**
Total Responses	**17**
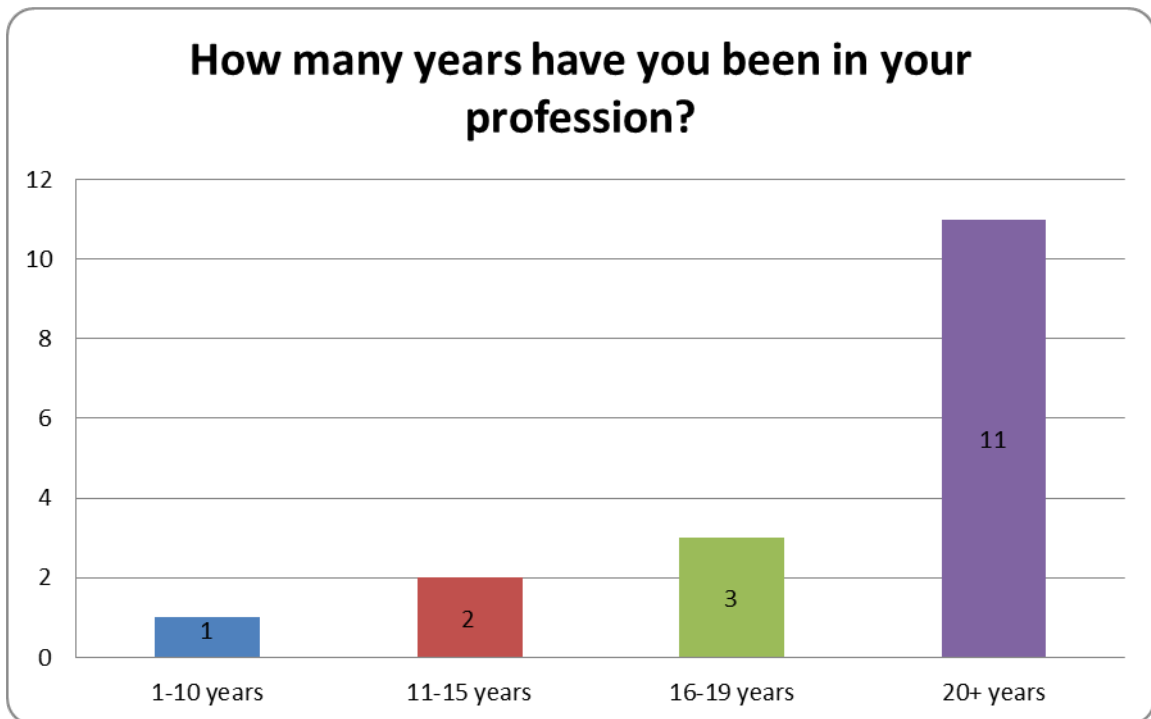
Have you received training regarding terrorism ?
Response Rate: 100% (N=17)Question Type: Choose one

Yes	**16**
No	**1**
Total Responses	**17**

Have you received training regarding terrorism ?
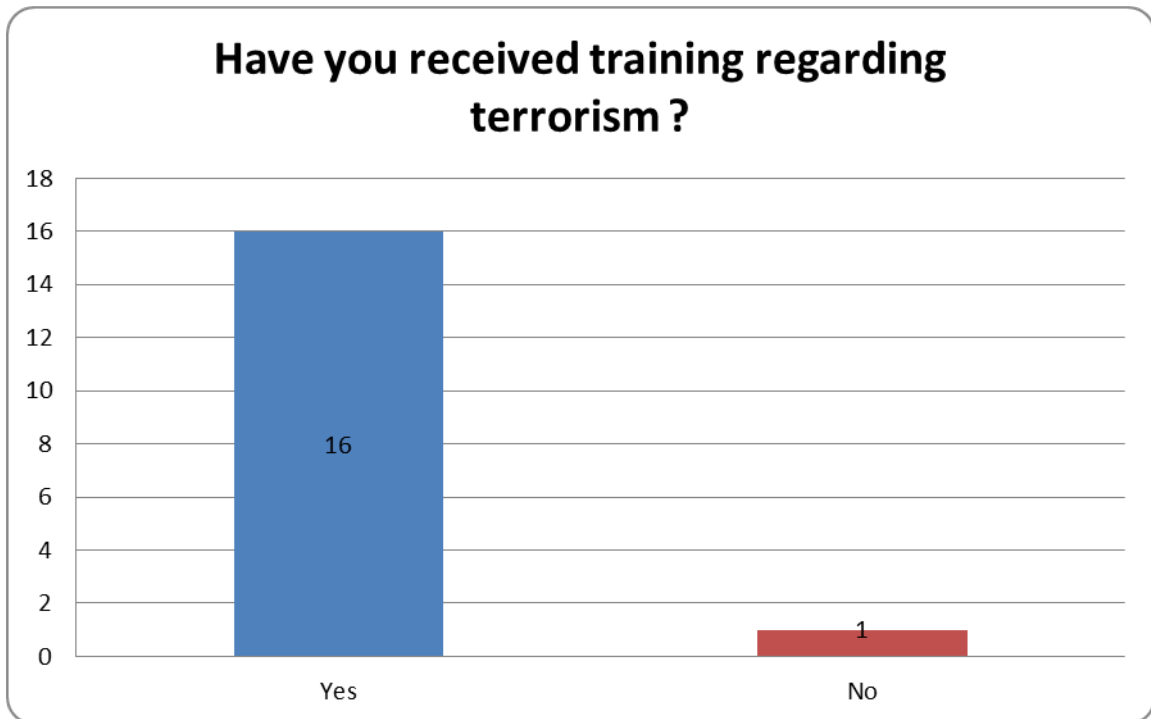
How often do you receive training regarding terrorism ?
Response Rate: **100% (N=17)** Question Type: **Choose one**

Never	**2**
Weekly	**1**
Monthly	**3**
Quarterly	**2**
Annually	**9**
Total Responses	**17**
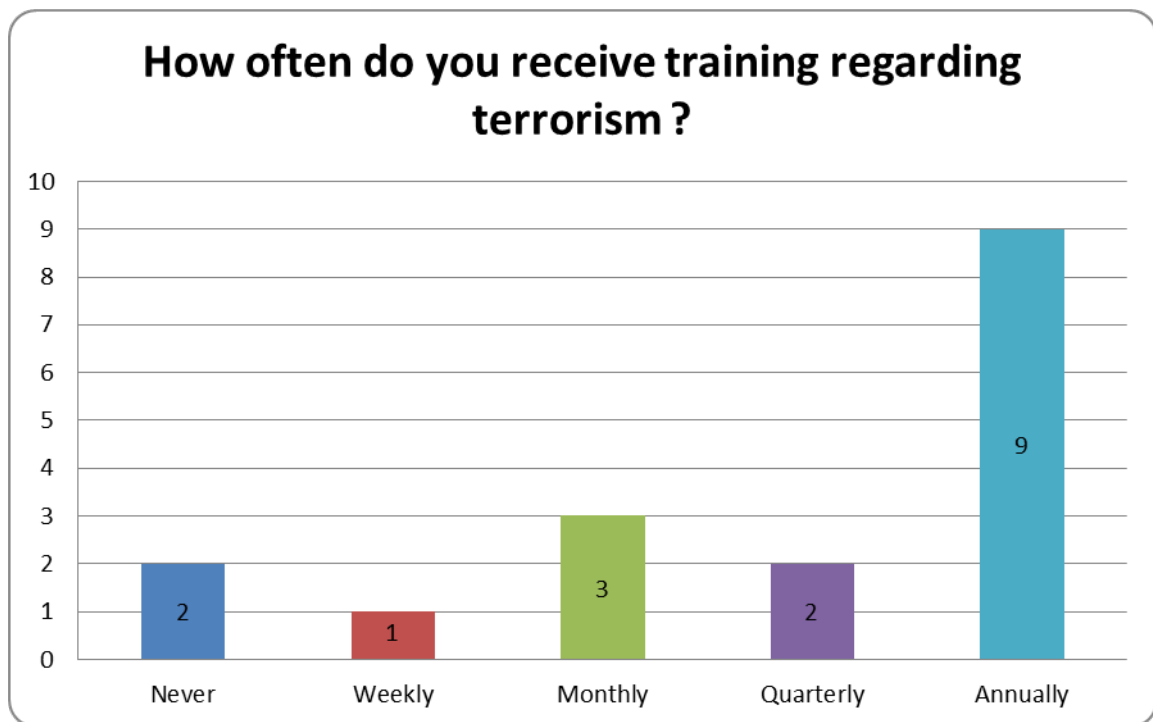
How often do you receive training regarding terrorism ?

Have you received training regarding transnational criminal organizations?
Response Rate: 100% (N=17) **Question Type: Choose one**

Yes	**14**
No	**3**
Total Responses	**17**

Have you received training regarding transnational criminal organizations?

Yes	14
No	3

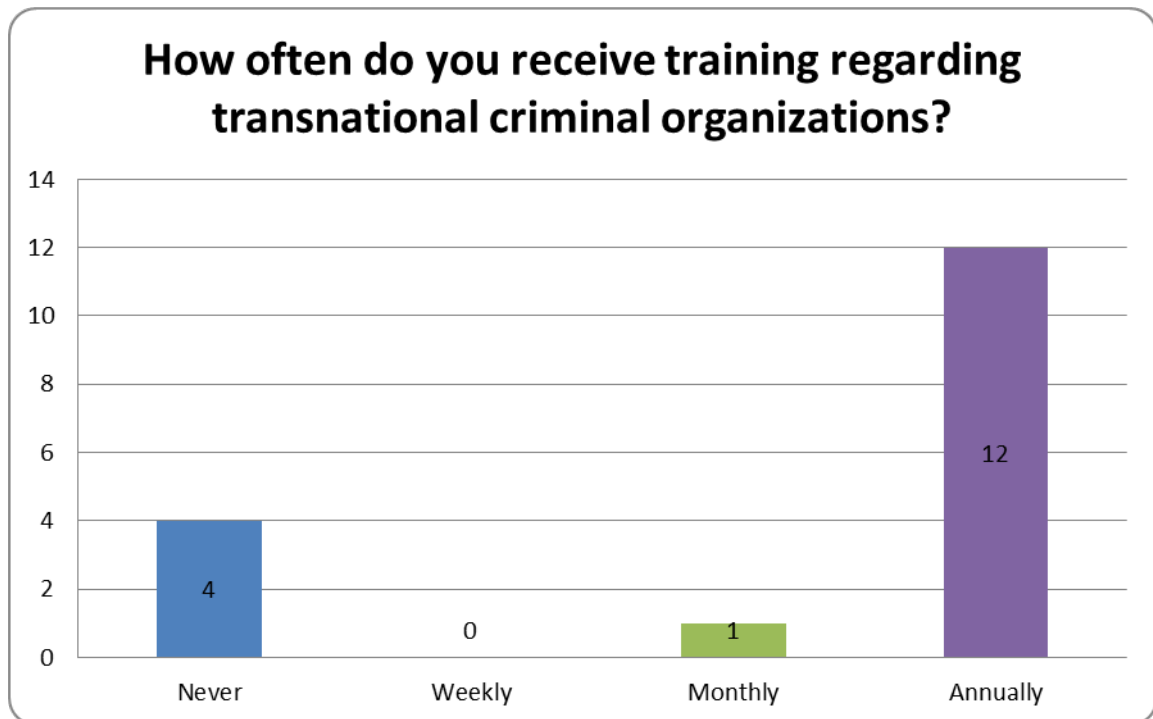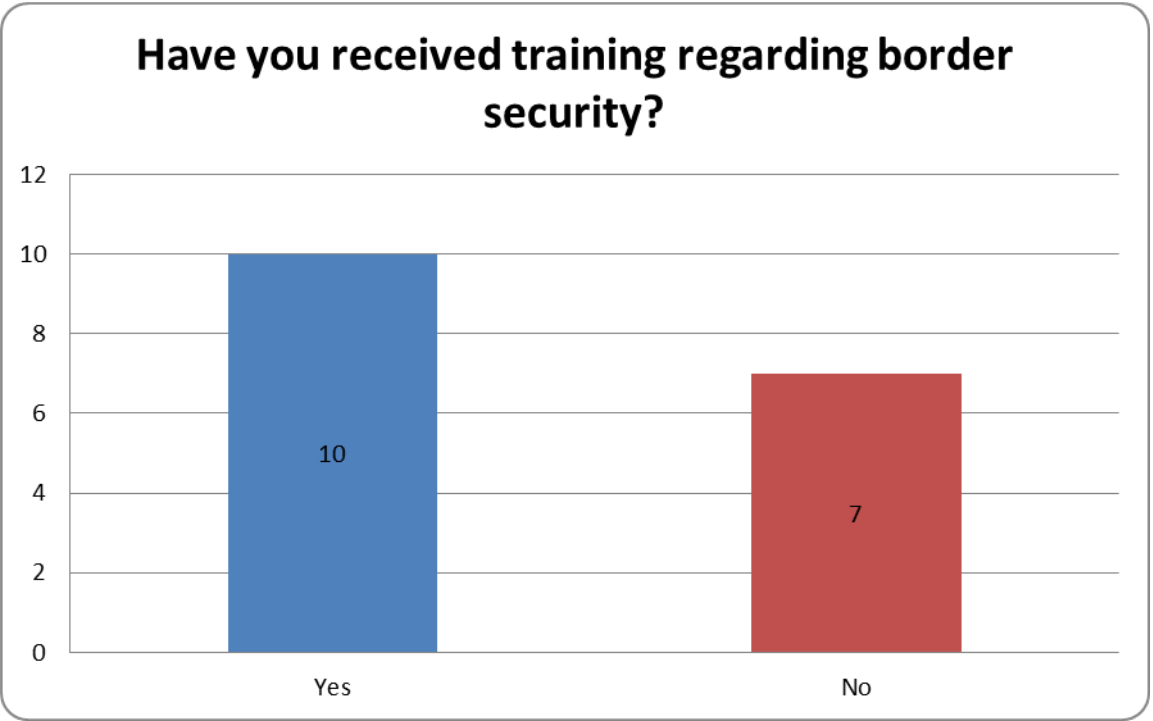How often do you receive training regarding transnational criminal organizations?
Response Rate: 100% (N=17) **Question Type: Choose one**

Never	**4**
Weekly	**0**
Monthly	**1**
Annually	**12**
Total Responses	**17**

How often do you receive training regarding transnational criminal organizations?

Have you received training regarding border security?
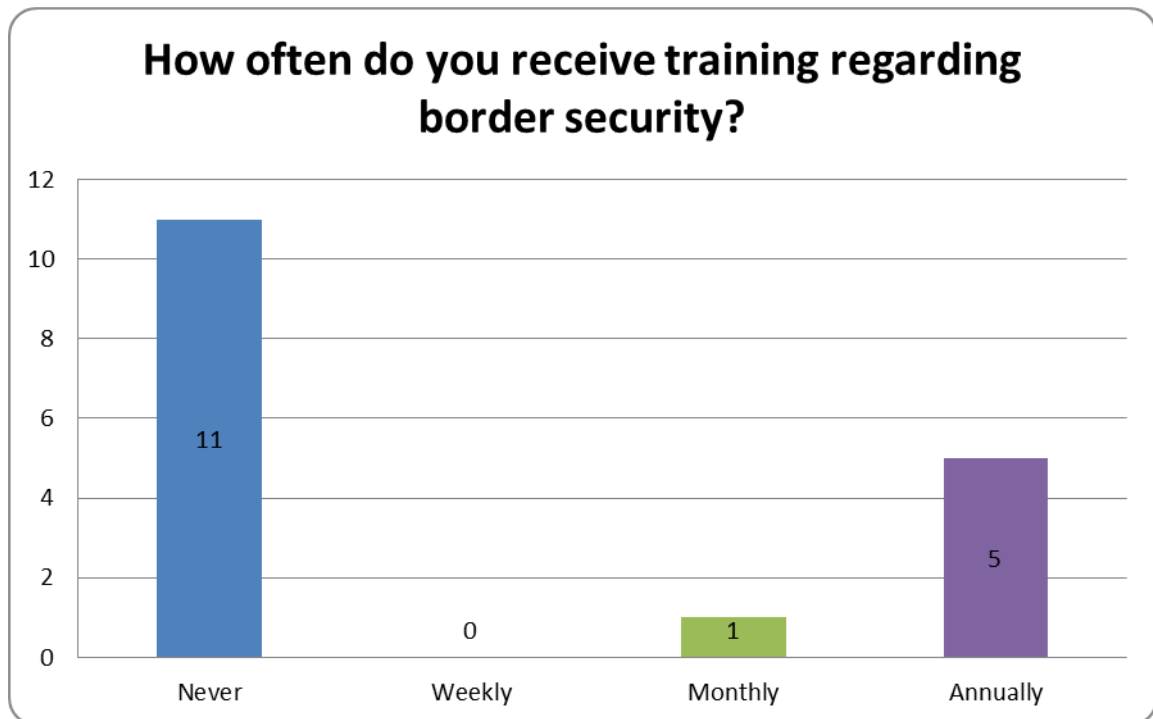
Yes	**10**
No	**7**
Total Responses	**17**

How often do you receive training regarding border security?
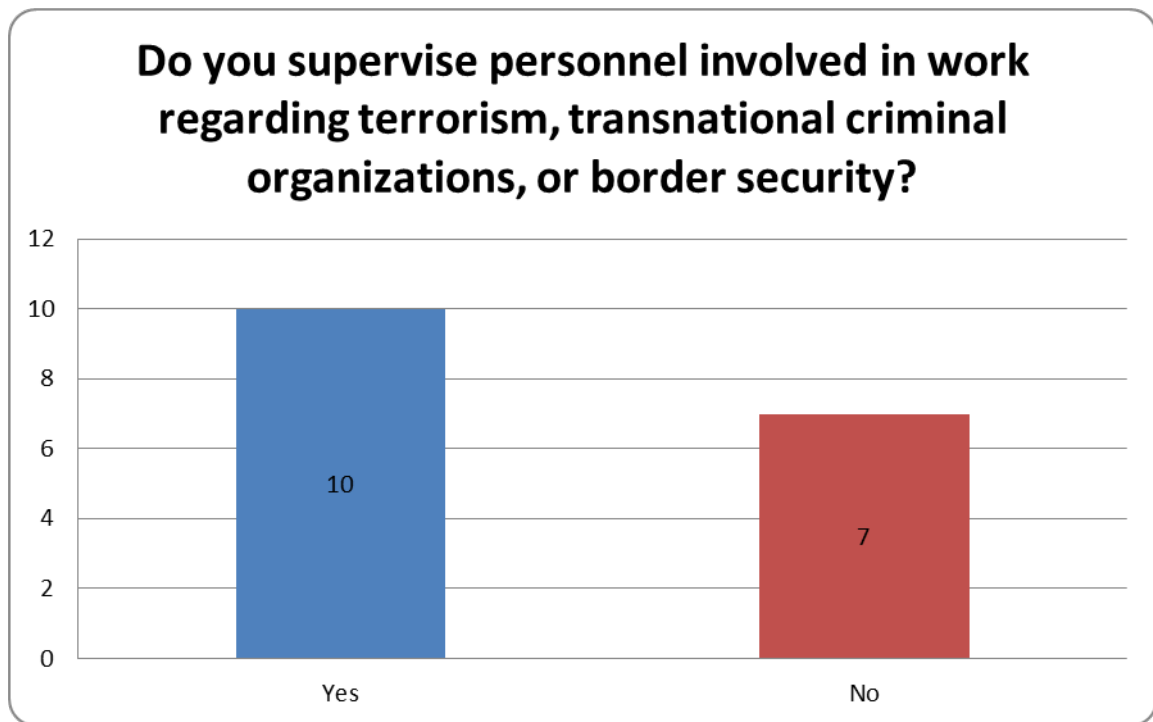**Response Rate: 100% (N=17)** Question Type: **Choose one**

Never	**11**
Weekly	**0**
Monthly	**1**
Annually	**5**
Total Responses	**17**

Do you supervise personnel involved in work regarding terrorism, transnational criminal organizations, or border security?
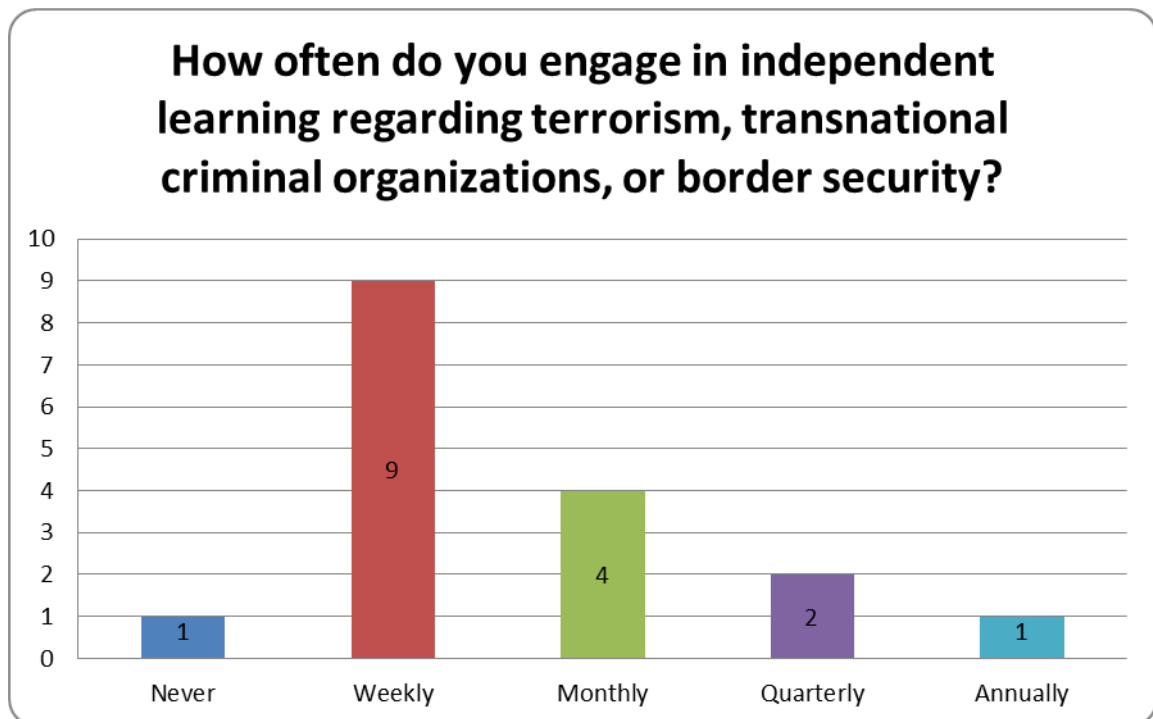
Yes	**10**
No	**7**
Total Responses	**17**

How often do you engage in independent learning regarding terrorism, transnational criminal organizations, or border security?
Response Rate: 100% (N=17) Question Type: **Choose one**

|	
Never	**1**
Weekly	**9**
Monthly	**4**
Quarterly	**2**
Annually	**1**
Total Responses	**17**

Indicate your level of knowledge in each area.

<u>Scale 1</u>

Question Type: Choose one

	No knowledge	Some knowledge	Moderate Knowledge	Extensive Knowledge	Expert Knowledge	Total Responses
Terrorism	0 0%	0 0%	5 29%	7 41%	5 29%	**17**
Border Security	1 6%	5 29%	2 12%	7 41%	2 12%	**17**
Transnational Criminal Organizations	0 0%	4 24%	3 18%	9 53%	1 6%	**17**
Total Responses	**1**	**9**	**10**	**23**	**8**	**51**
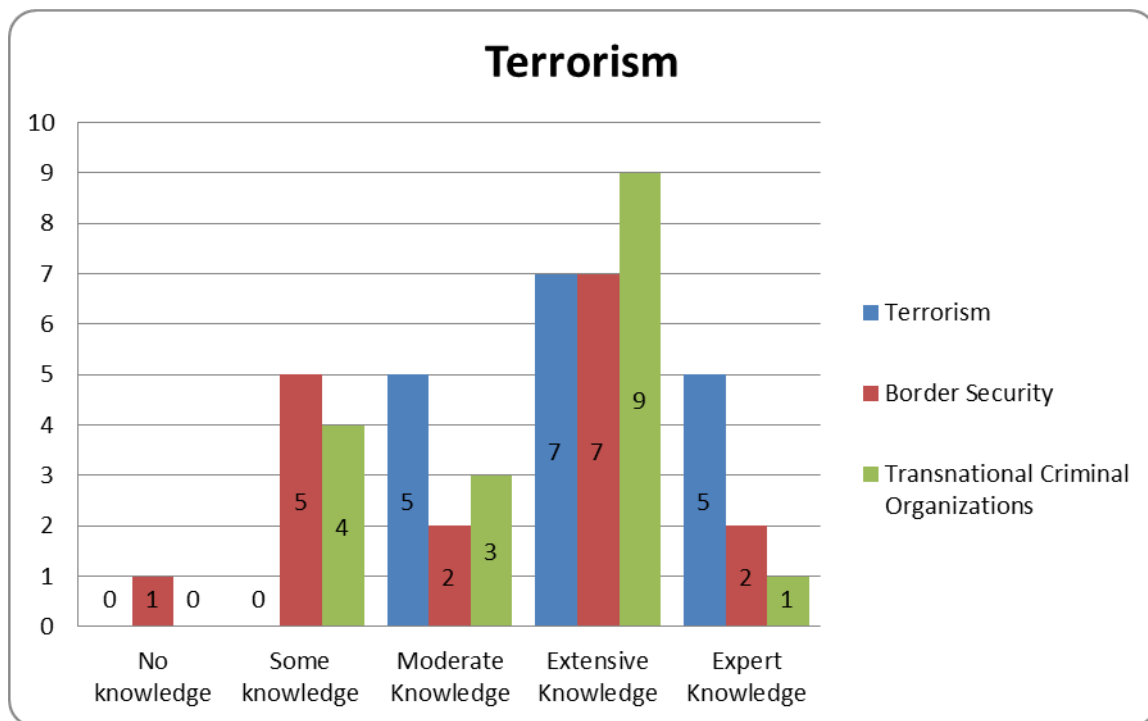
75

Terrorism
Response Rate: 100% (N=17) **Question Type: Choose one**

No knowledge	**0**
Some knowledge	**0**
Moderate Knowledge	**5**
Extensive Knowledge	**7**
Expert Knowledge	**5**
Total Responses	**17**

Terrorism

Response	Count
No knowledge	0
Some knowledge	0
Moderate Knowledge	5
Extensive Knowledge	7
Expert Knowledge	5
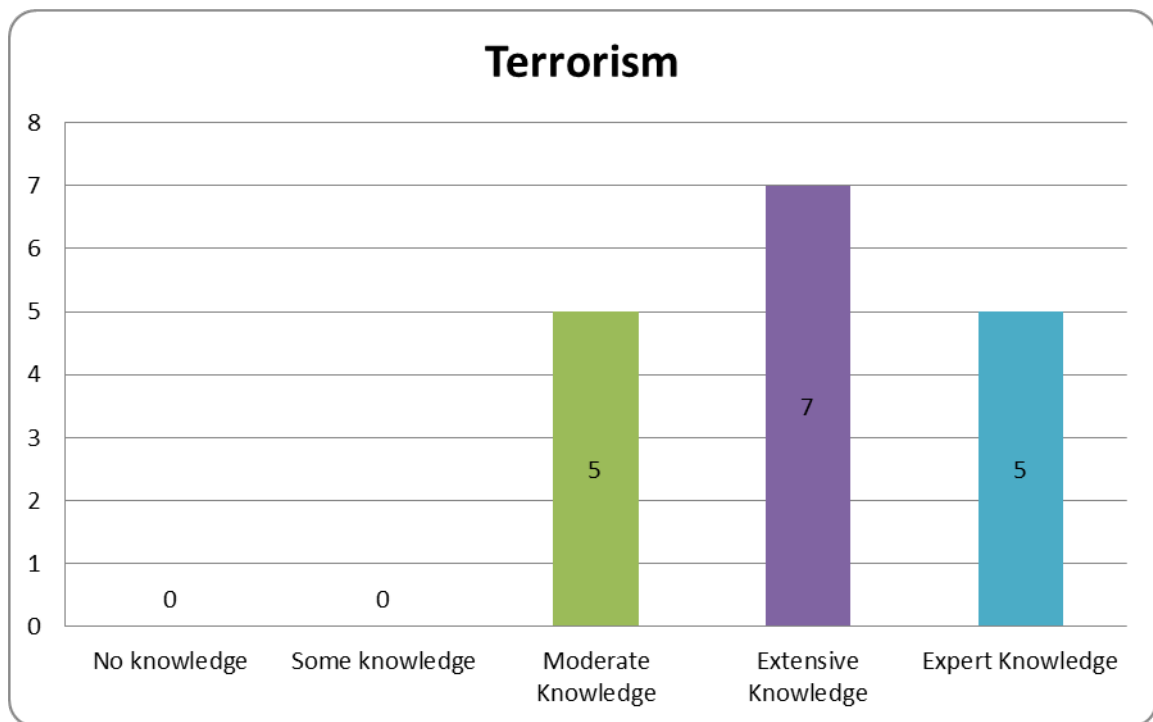
Border Security
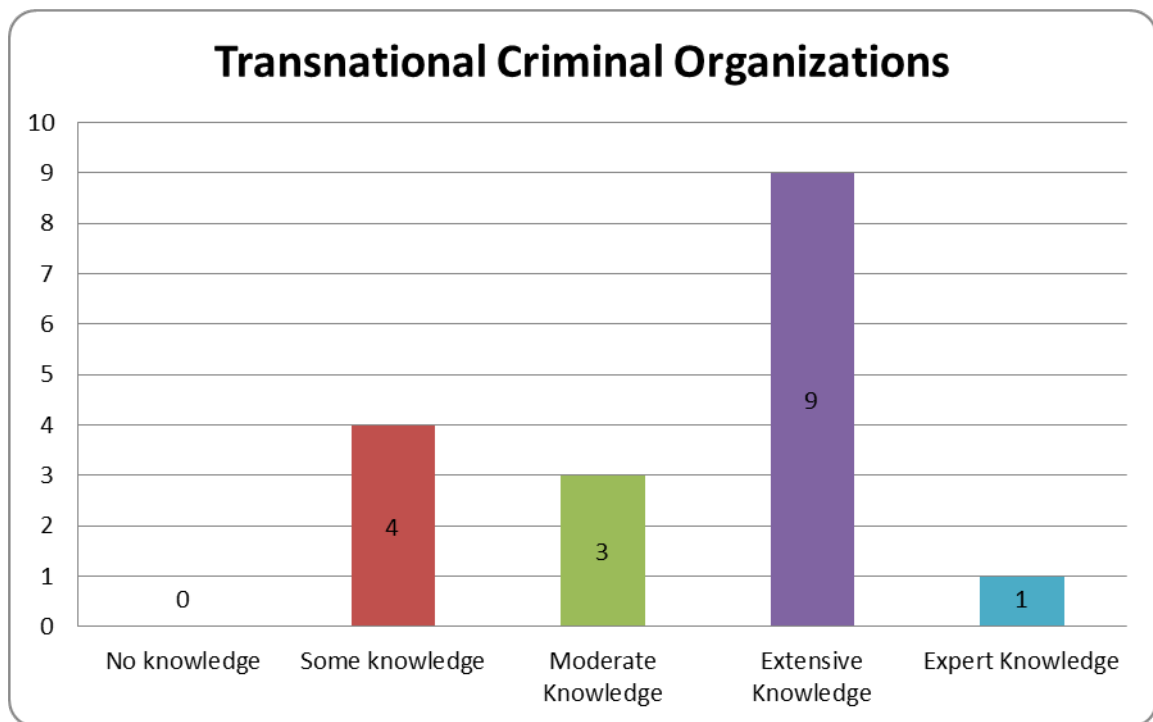Response Rate: **100% (N=17)** Question Type: **Choose one**

No knowledge	**1**
Some knowledge	**5**
Moderate Knowledge	**2**
Extensive Knowledge	**7**
Expert Knowledge	**2**
Total Responses	**17**
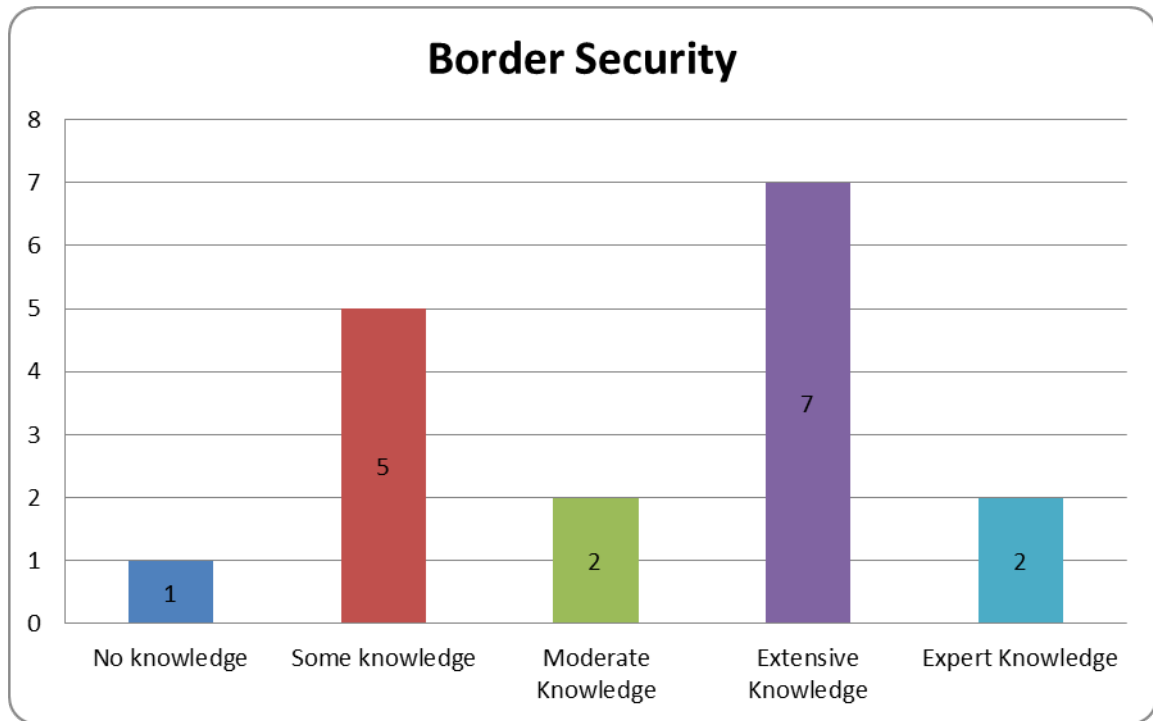
Border Security

Transnational Criminal Organizations
Response Rate: 100% (N=17) Question Type: **Choose one**

No knowledge	**0**
Some knowledge	**4**
Moderate Knowledge	**3**
Extensive Knowledge	**9**
Expert Knowledge	**1**
Total Responses	**17**

Do terror groups outside the US demonstrate intent to attack the US homeland?

Yes	**17**
No	**0**
Total Responses	**17**

Do terror groups outside the US demonstrate intent to attack the US homeland?
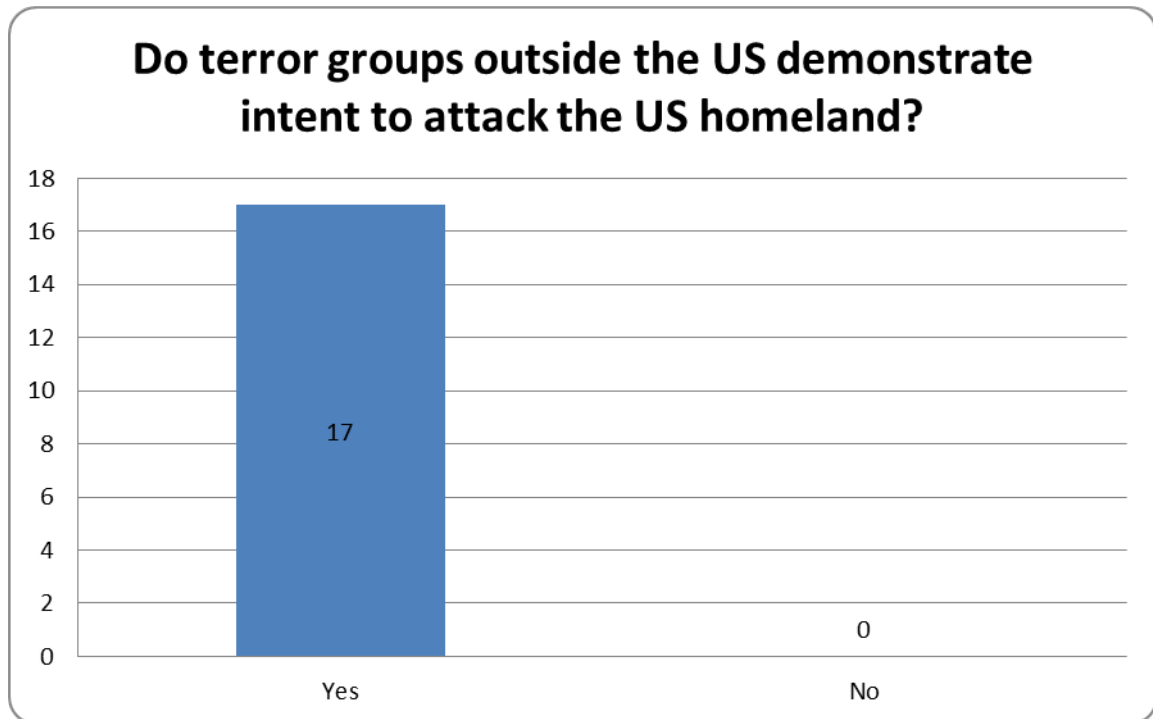
You stated yes, please explain.

Susbstantive cases investigated and prosecuted by Federal Law Enforcement have demonstrated many of the subjects either received direct guidance or were influenced by designated terrorist organizations prior to the commission of their crimes. Additionally, propoganda such as Inspire Magazine clearly demonstrates the intent of designated terrorist organizations to attack the US.

They stated they intend to attack the homeland, they have attacked us in the past, and have made repeated attempts to do so.

Open Source reporting regarding ISIL's intent to have extremists conduct attacks whereever they are located. Al Shabaab's recent statements about attacking various malls throughout the world. Numerous other terrorist group intent on attacking US interests abroad and in the homeland.

Yes, some groups make explicit statements communicating an intent to attack the U.S. and /or urge those of like mind to carry out attacks such as Dabiq magazine urging individuals to conduct attacks.

Terrorist groups have demonstrated their intent to attack the United States. Attacks on the World Trade Center, and most recently, Boston are testament to their intent. Terrorist groups have also demonstrated their intent via known thwarted attacks on a U.S. flight, as well as the attempt to smuggle explosives through a U.S. port of entry. Attacks of the Marine barracks in Lebanon, the USS Cole, as well as various U.S. Embassys(and U.S. Embassy personnel)in the Middle East and North Africa clearly signal the intent of terrorist groups to attack the U.S. In addition, rhetoric from known terrorist groups speak loudly of their intent to attack the U.S.

The US is, and has been a prime target for terrorists. 9/11, WTC 93, attempted assassination of Pres. Truman, FALN, Croatian 1976 hijacking, CIA shooting 1993, Empire state building shooting, Etc.

Open sources readily state the intent of various organizations outise of the USA to conduct terrorism on the US Homeland.

I think we see their intent with some of the people who have been arrested in our country in possession of explosives. In my opinion these people have ties to terror groups and are looking to cause mass damage and mass casualties to Americans.

Yes, they have documented their intent in Inspire, Dabiq, and Azam.

Yes. Review the ideological statements of various groups across the global landscape of terrorism. Some have clearly stated an intent to attack US homeland targets.

Many have the intent but not the capability to attack the homeland. An attack would likely come in the form of an individual or small group. These might be homegrown terrorists affiliating with a foreign group or a few members traveling to the United States legally and getting weapons once in the U.S. The most likely external groups would be an AQ affiliated one, the al-Mulathamun Bn in northern Mali, or a returning U.S. or EU citizen trained in Syria with ISIS. The realm of possible would also include any of these groups smuggling personnel across the U.S. border.

From my operational experience alienated or criminals will attack americans whenever they have the chance. These actions are the result of Muslim extremists paying rewards

for attacks against westerners. Criminals around the world will claim any religious or extremist group affiliation after an attack if they receive money in return.

Terror groups outside of the US influence the potential for terrorist actions within the United States. The issue of home grown extremists and lone wolf offenders espousing the beliefs of terror groups wherever they may be in the world present an emerging and consistent threat that we must be prepared to address. These group use of social media to incite and recruit from all over the world no longer bounds the threat geographically.

Terror groups outside the U.S. have demonstrated more than an intent to attack the U.S., they have executed their threats of action into successful terrorists attacks in the U.S. Recent open source reporting indicates that a video by the Al-Shabaab terrorists group advocates attacks on large malls, including the Mall of America. In the past, open source reporting indicates that one Al-Qaida strategy is to attack targets in the U.S. The terrorist events of 9-11 and bombings have occurred in several locations in the U.S. The worldwide threats of terror have resulted in the closing of a number of U.S. Embassies/facilities.

Multiple terror groups OCONUS have openly declared their intent to harm and/or attack the U.S. Homeland. Open source media routinely reports "calls to arms" or "lone wolf" attacks against the U.S. In the last month alone I've read open source reports that Al Qaeda (Yemeni based specifically) and ISIS leaders encouraged followers to attack the U.S. homeland.

Many international terror groups prosyletize and work to convince their followers to attack independently against targets of opportunity in the United States.

Beyond core al Qaeda and their splinter organizations who continue to demonstrate intent, the Islamic State establishment of a caliphate creates a vehicle to radicalize extremists in the U.S.

Total Responses: 17

Are transnational criminal organizations operating across US borders?

Yes	**17**
No	**0**
Total Responses	**17**

Are transnational criminal organizations operating across US borders?

	Yes	No
	17	0
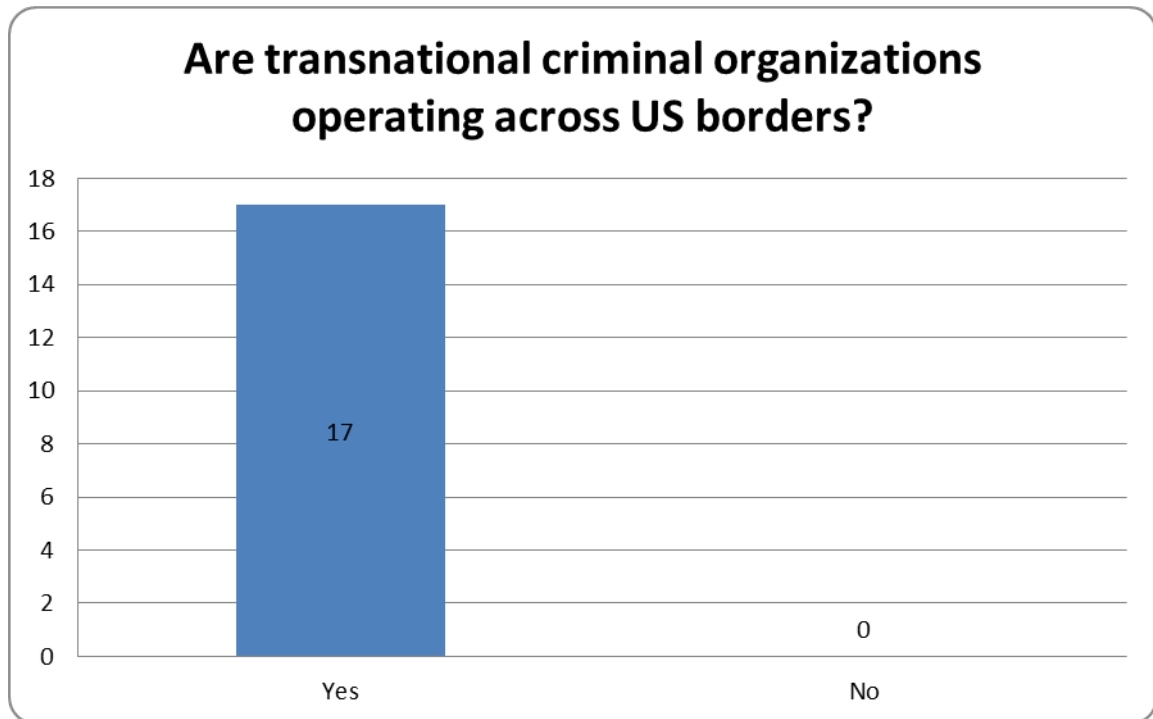
You stated yes, please explain.

TCO's operating in Colombia are routinely interdicted on the high seas attempting to smuggle cocaine from Colombia to the US or other transhipment locations for eventual passage to the US. These narcotics often first go to Mexico and than cross the South West Border into the US. The proceeds from this illicit activity are eventually laundered back into Colombia and Mexico to support the cycle. There are also similar organizations moving Heroin from the middle east into the US in a similar fashion.

Primarily drug cartel operations across the border from Mexico. Also, drug smuggling out of Central and South America.

Open Source awareness of these organizations conducting operations across the US - Mexicao border.

The body of literature indicates TCOs operate across our borders.

Today known transnational criminal organizations (TCOs)smuggle people and narcotics into the U.S. through the southern, northern and coastal borders. They also smuggle currency and weapons out of the U.S., as well as launder money. For example, known TCOs in the Bahamas use their global criminal network and influence to smuggle people and contraband into the Bahamas. Once contraband is staged in the Bahamas, the TCOs use vessels and aircraft to smuggle their contraband into Florida.

The US borders are exploited all day, everyday by TCO's. Human smuggling, drug smuggling, currency trafficking and illegal weapons are all moved across the border by TCO's.

Open sources readily report the significant drug flow into the US Homeland.

There are many drug trafficking cartels that make their living operating across our US borders.

Mexican drug cartels have been implicated in several murders and compete for territory within the United States.

Broad spectrum here, from Chinese human trafficking networks, to Mexican drug cartels, to Lebanese cigarette smuggling rackets, and so forth.

Drugs still move across the border extensively. Smuggling networks for human trafficking also operate rather uninhibited. While our homeland defense may be able to counter the most extensive of the drugs and weapons from criminal organizations, a certain quantity will continue to come across.

The Boston Bombers were in some part sponsored by entities outside of the united states. Additionally, TCOs from Mexico crossing the border is so prevalent that its part of the american narrative now.

Transnational criminal organizations operate across the borders in a variety of ways, whether through smuggling of persons, contraband, narcotics, etc or through trade based money laundering operations that support criminal and terrorist organizations.

Transnational organizations transcend the borders and operate globally across nations borders. Transnational criminal organizations have historically operated across the U.S. borders to smuggle contraband and people into and out of the U.S. These formal and informal networks of command, operational, and logistical support personnel work to breach the U.S. border in furtherance of illegal activities like; narcotics, arms, goods,

currency and human smuggling to further the organizations criminal goals for profit.

I currently manage a robust intelligence unit focused on border security in Florida. We see daily incursions into the U.S. or it's territorial waters by designated TCO's. I'm also briefed on on-going events nationally. Multiple times daily U.S. borders are breached by TCOs (Southern, Northern, Coastal and Caribbean including Puerto Rico and the USVI).

A multitude of TCO operate within the US. Specifically, many of the gangs we see in the US are funded by transnational crime. Cambodian gangs in CA, MS-13, are two examples.

Multiple organizations to include alien smuggling, human trafficking, drug smuggling, money laundering, identity theft, etc. operate across our borders.

Total Responses: 17

You stated no, please explain.
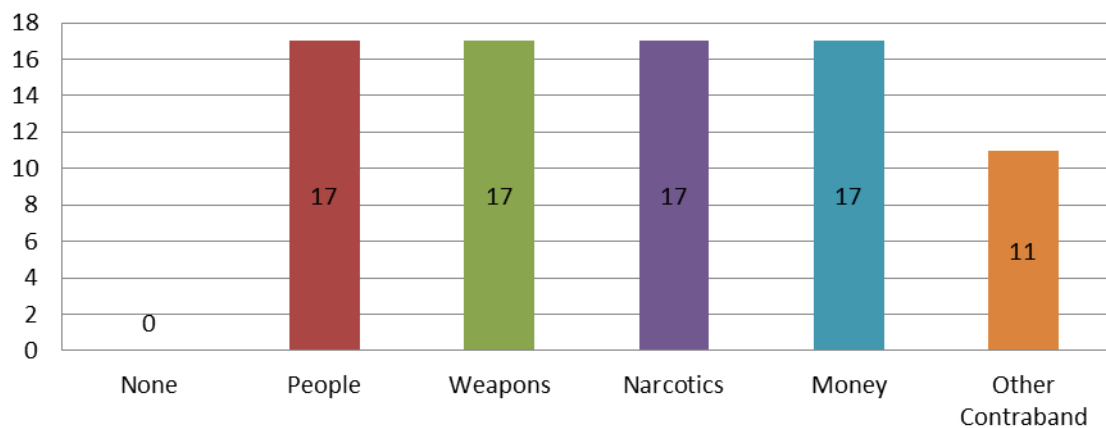**Response Rate: 0% (N=0)** **Question Type: Paragraph**

Total Responses: 0

Which of the following do transnational criminal organizations have the ability to smuggle undetected into the United States? Please select all that apply.

None	**0**
People	**17**
Weapons	**17**
Narcotics	**17**
Money	**17**
Other Contraband	**11**
Total Responses	**79**

<u>Other Responses</u>

Anything	**1**
Cigarettes, counterfeit CD/DVD, clothes, electronics, etc	**1**
Credit card/Identity theft	**1**
Explosives	**1**
goods	**1**
misdecalered goods to evade duty/tariff	**1**
nuclear material/components to build WME	**1**
trade based money laundering activity	**1**
Total Responses	**8**

Do terror groups have the capability to enter the United States undetected without the cooperation of transnational criminal organizations?

Yes	**16**
No	**1**
Total Responses	**17**
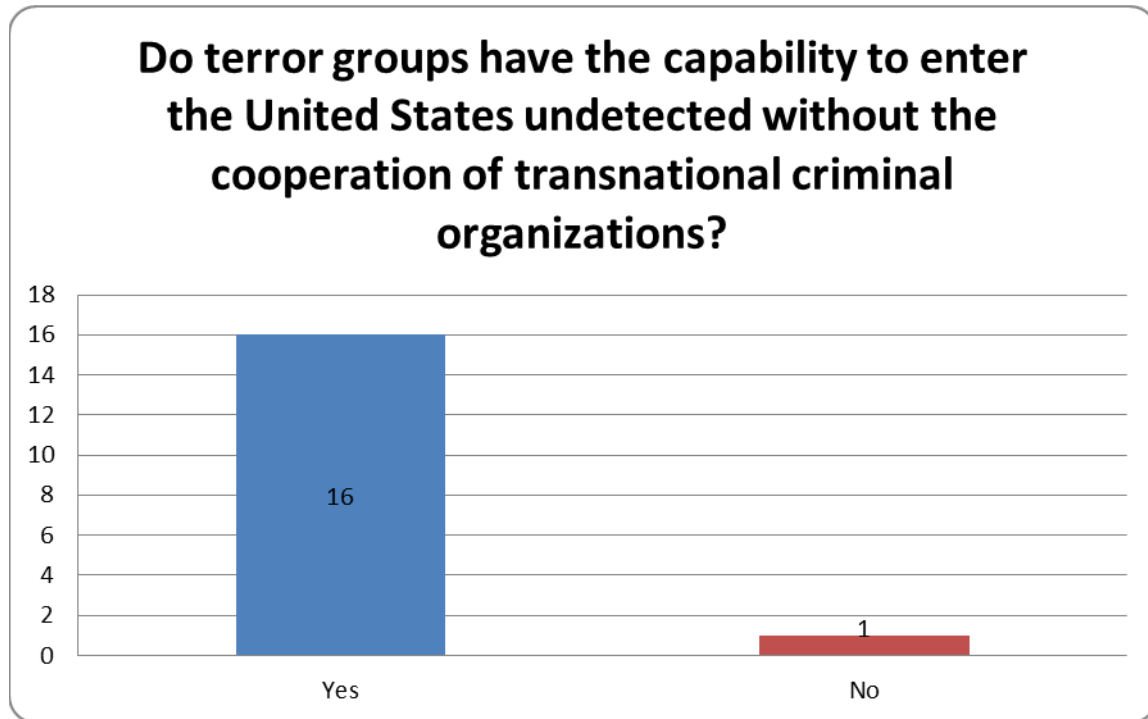
Please explain.

Although, collaboration with a TCO could expedite passage of a terrorist into the US it is not essential. If a terrorist can obtain a passport for a non-visa country they can easily access the US. In addition, potential terrorists can utilize other purposes, i.e. business, education etc. to travel to the US. Once inside the country our country does not have the appropriate systems in place to monitor these visitors; therfore, allowing them the ability to plan and carryout an attack against the US.

They have infiltrated CONUS in the past w/o the assistance of transnational criminal organizations, and can certainly do so again...although it is somewhat more difficult now than in the past.

For example, through the Refugee Program and the VISA Waiver Program from select countries.

Terror groups are able to enter the U.S. without TCO cooperation, though TCO might

facilitate terrorist group crossings and make them less vulnerable to detection and interdiction.

A single person or loose confederate of people with radical/terrorist ideas can acquire open source information from the internet on how to enter the U.S. undetected. Terror groups can also enter the U.S. under false pretenses using valid visas.

People cross the US border undetected on a regular basis. There is no reason to believe a terrorist could not do the same.

The logic of a dedicated and determined terrorist orgnaization to conduict its own preparation and action plans to enter the USA is apparent when these orgnaizations know the attention-sureveillance-interdiction efforts that transnational criminal orgnaizations receive from multiple USG actvities.

I believe the majority of terror groups use the transnational criminal organizations to get across our US borders, but I do feel that some of them can enter on their own without the assistance of the transnational criminal organizations.

The Canadian border is porous. In addition, while harder, terrorists with "clean" background can enter on tourist visas.

Terrorist group members can enter the U.S. in a variety of ways that have nothing to do with TCOs. Read the 9/11 Commission Report for some examples.

Our border is too large to prevent a motivated individual from entering the united states.

While terror groups may utilize transnational criminal organizations as the avenue to facilitate their entry into the United States, we cannot discount the ability of terrorist groups to develop the means necessary to develop methods to enter the US undetected.

I would think that terror groups utilize transnational organizations to cross U.S. borders. Transnational criminal organizations have established networks of command, operational, and logistical support personnel that work to breach the U.S. border, so I think that it is highly probable that terror groups have the capability to enter the U.S. undetected by utilizing transnational criminal organizations.

I believe well funded, well educated terror operatives could conceivably carry out requisite counter-surveillance and reconnaissance of U.S. Customs and Border Protection forces to effect a successful entry without support from TCOs.

I think there are many coyotes who smuggle people with no ties to TCO. There are also many other paths to enter the US such as through student visas and diplomatic exchanges. Terrorist and TCO recruiters both use these means to get young people with clean backgrounds to different countries to serve the needs of the organization.
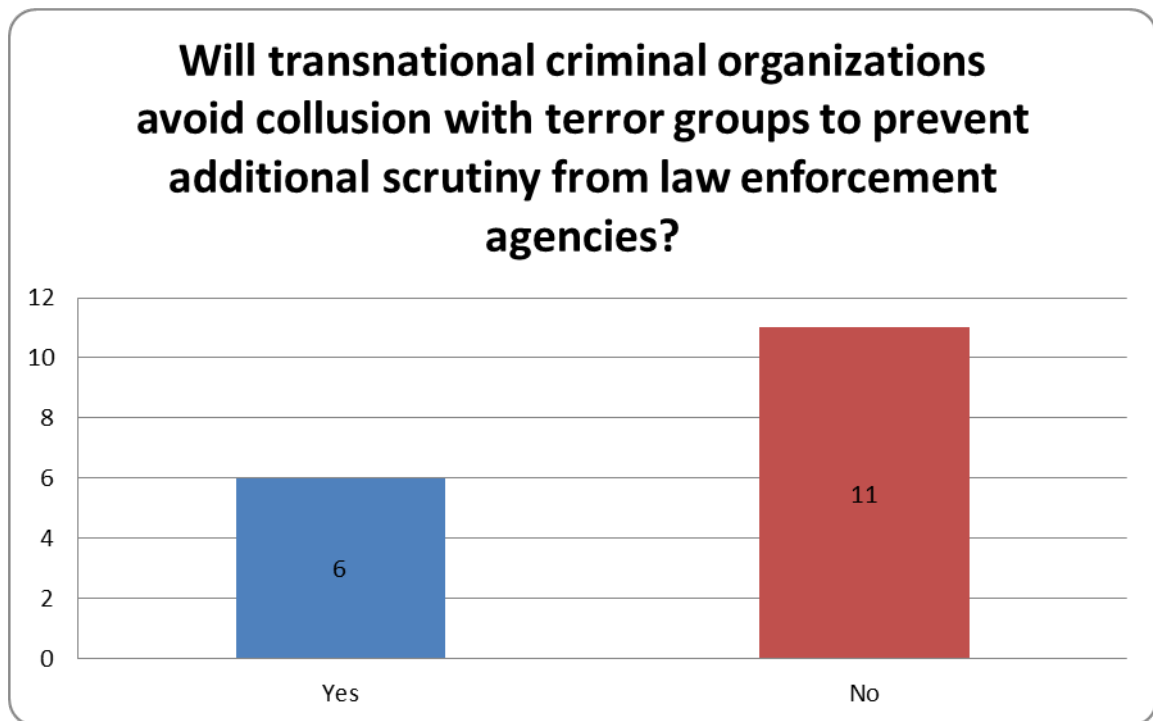
It is likely that terrorist organizations could cross the U.S. border without the assistance of TCOs (i.e. maritime entry from adjacent islands).

Total Responses: 16

Will transnational criminal organizations avoid collusion with terror groups to prevent additional scrutiny from law enforcement agencies?

Yes	**6**
No	**11**
Total Responses	**17**

Will transnational criminal organizations avoid collusion with terror groups to prevent additional scrutiny from law enforcement agencies?

Do terror groups and transnational criminal organizations need to share the same ideology to work together?
Response Rate: **100% (N=17)** Question Type: **Choose one**

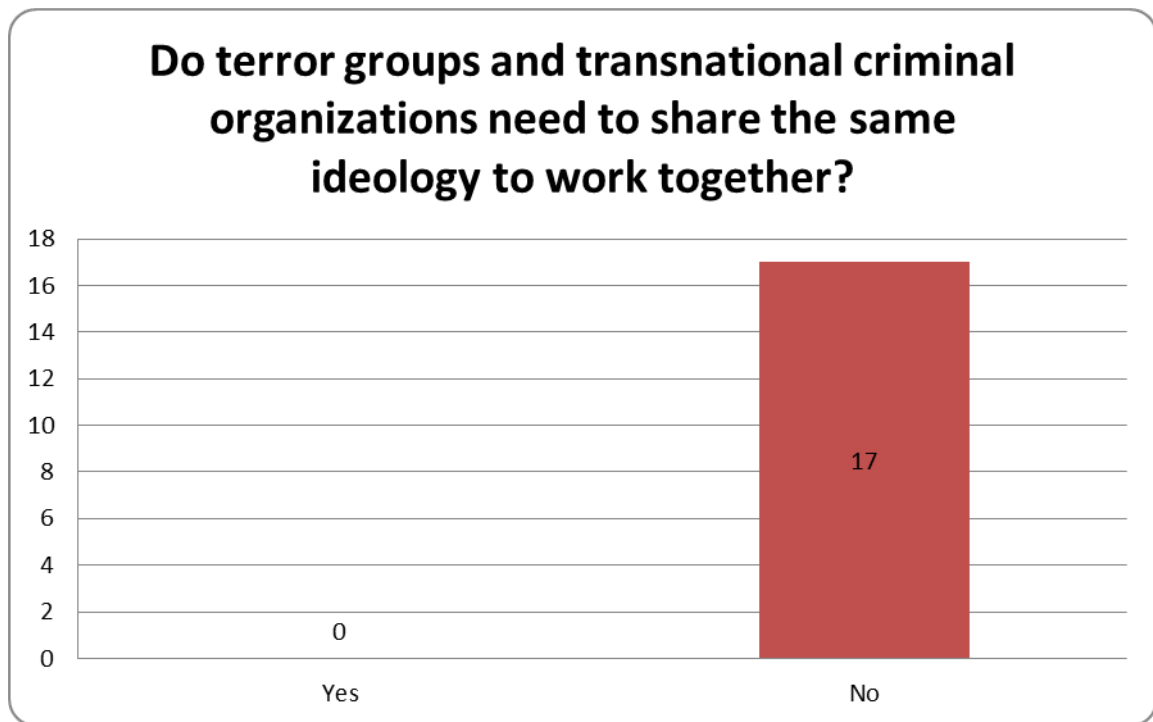|	
Yes	**0**
No	**17**
Total Responses	**17**

Do terror groups and transnational criminal organizations need to share the same ideology to work together?

Is monetary incentive sufficient for transnational criminal organizations to assist terror groups to enter the US illegally?
Response Rate: **100% (N=17)** Question Type: **Choose one**
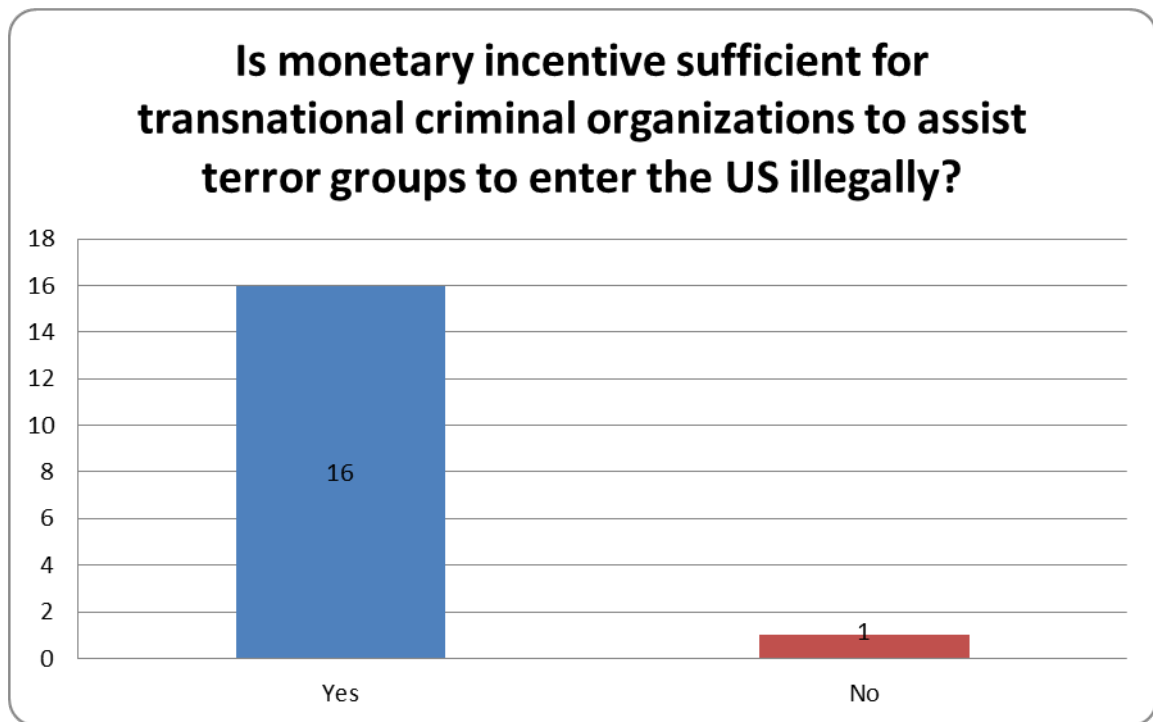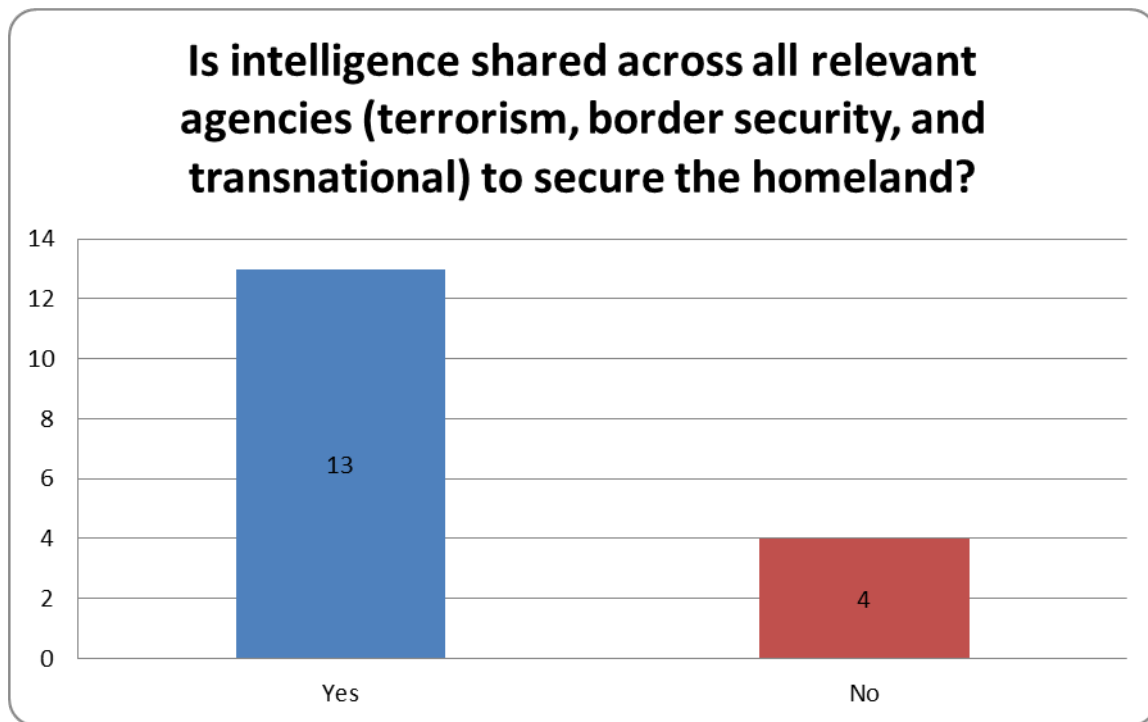
Yes	**16**
No	**1**
Total Responses	**17**

Is monetary incentive sufficient for transnational criminal organizations to assist terror groups to enter the US illegally?

Is intelligence shared across all relevant agencies (terrorism, border security, and transnational) to secure the homeland?
Response Rate: 100% (N=17) Question Type: **Choose one**

Yes	**13**
No	**4**
Total Responses	**17**

You indicated Intelligence is shared. Please explain.
Response Rate: 76% (N=13) Question Type: **Paragraph**

Sharing occurs through the Joint Terrorism Task Forces, IIRs, and other intelligence reports disseminated by US Intelligence Community Partners. Sharing can always improve.

I would hope through the various Task Forces intelligence is being shared. That is one of the main purposes for Task Forces and Task Force Officcers (TFOs).

Both information and intelligence are shared with the Border Patrol. For example, agents are members of multi-agency task forces such as FBI's JTTF, while routinely conducting targeted intelligence-driven border security operations with local, state and Federal law enforcement partners. Border Patrol occupies various positions at U.S. Embassys abroad to share information with other law enforcement agencies, while also assigning agents to INTERPOL. The Border Patrol is also sharing intelligence/information through targeting campaigns such as the Southern Border and Approaches Campaign, uniting DHS and other components.

Citizens expect the joint terrorism task forces (JTTF) to be sharing information within allowable law enforcement and other activity regulations, directives, or US law.

I think there is some intelligence shared but in my opinion there should be a lot more sharing in order to better protect our country.

The Joint terrorism Task Forces and post 9-11 reforms encourage sharing and reduced legal obstructions to sharing.

This varies in quality and quantity from day to day, from case to case, and from country to country. You cannot generalize it all using a Yes/No question.

In my experience, when an "outside focused" agency learns of important information that has any sort of homeland nexus, it immediately jumps to the top of the priority list for dissemination. Senior leaders constantly reinforced this point, which is good from an intel sharing perspective.

Intelligence sharing across departments and agencies through assignment to task forces, operational mechanisms and other intelligence groups.

Within the U.S. Department of Homeland Security there is a unity of effort to ensure that the agencies work together and share intelligence to prevent cross border crime and prevent terrorism.

I have seen the U.S. Intelligence community (CONUS at least) make great strides in cooperative intel-sharing post 9/11/01. Many federal agencies now participate in Joint Terror Task Forces across the U.S. which also include state and local partners.

Intelligence information is shared, but there are still challenges domestically. Our freedoms of speech and assembly make it easy for organizations to use against the US. In intelligence we have restrictions on collecting that can be a challenge.

However, the sharing of intelligence sometimes may not be in its raw form or may be with only select individuals (for instance, those who work on a specified task force) and that may not be further shared with others in a particular agency.

Total Responses: 13

How can the intelligence sharing process be improved?
Response Rate: 88% (N=15)Question Type: Paragraph

That's a great question, and short of weekly meetings between FBI, CIA, DIA, NSA, NRO and other intel gathering organizations...it's really going to depend on the personal/professional relationships built between various agency personnel...individual agents, operators, CI, etc. The development of JTTFs that bring together personnel from the federal and state/local side of LE is a positive move.

Continuing to work on improving Task Forces, greater participation with agencies not currently allocating a TFO to Task Forces, Working Groups among various agencies Intelligence Analysts.

Work on increased interaction between local, state, federal and tribal agencies and also the private sector and individual citizens.

There are several things that could be done better to facilitate the intelligence sharing process. For example, agencies could re-evaluate current inter-agency agreements regarding intelligence/information sharing. Attention should also be placed on expanding partnerships with foreign law enforcement/intelligence agencies, as well as multi-agency task forces. At some point, additional law enforcement and intelligence resources should be applied throughout the Caribbean to combat TCOs there.

As in above, is the process or processes perfect? No. To improve the larger processes, continued emphasis on civilian awareness in reporting suspicious activities observed, formal programs such as eGuardian and/or I-SPY awareness and use--and evaluation of production. We, as citizens, are all part of a responsible process.

I think all agencies should be more open with the sharing of information. I think too many times intelligence agencies hold their information too close for fear of losing control of their investigations or they don't want to expose their source of the information so they don't share all of the information.

1. culture changes to encourage sharing 2. structural changes to make it a push process vice pull process

This is a huge question requiring a much more comprehensive answer than I have time for here. There are ample reports by U.S. agencies, think tanks in Washington, DC and academics where this question is addressed in significant detail. In my own view, there are budgeting issues, organizational culture issues (e.g. protecting one's turf), jurisdictional issues, personal issues, mission differences (e.g. law enforcement need to gather intelligence for different reasons, and in different ways, than the CIA), and so forth. The reorganization of the IC into the DNI was a small step in a positive direction, but there are generational challenges which will take time if they are be overcome.

Ensure that all agencies participate. It did seem at times that certain agencies within the Intel Community are more reluctant to share their information.

Intelligence sharing could be improved by taking information at the classified/secret level and making field level actionable intelligence that can impact daily operations without comprising information at the classified/secret level. Often the information at the classified/secret level cannot be shared in a way that can influence operations.

I think that great efforts have been made post 9-11 to ensure that Federal, State, local, and

Tribal public safety agencies have the infrastructure and mindset to work together to pursue a common goal of preventing terrorists attacks in the U.S. and around the world. This process like all processes must learn and evolve to improve, but I think the most important factor to improve the process requires that the people doing the job at all levels do what they can to ensure interoperability and information sharing.

Although great strides have been made between the varied investigative branches of the U.S. federal government (CONUS), and with state and local partners, I believe there is room for improvement between Department of Homeland Security and Department of Defense intelligence assets. DHS would benefit from greater input and interaction from DOD (especially in regards to narcotics smuggling and foreign terror intelligence with U.S. homeland nexus). Intelligence sharing within the Department of Homeland Security, specifically between Immigration and Customs Enforcement and fellow agencies could be improved. Operational De-confliction is still lacking in some instances.

The process could be improved if better reporting systems were in place to track information such as students who are approved for visas, but do not report to school. That type of information would be valuable in finding people within the US who may be here for reasons other than education.

I think the task force concept without the restrictions of memorandums of understanding is the best approach when it comes to national security. A successful model to follow would be Joint Inter-Agency Task Force - South in Key West. The challenge is to ensure the correct people are assigned to the task force.
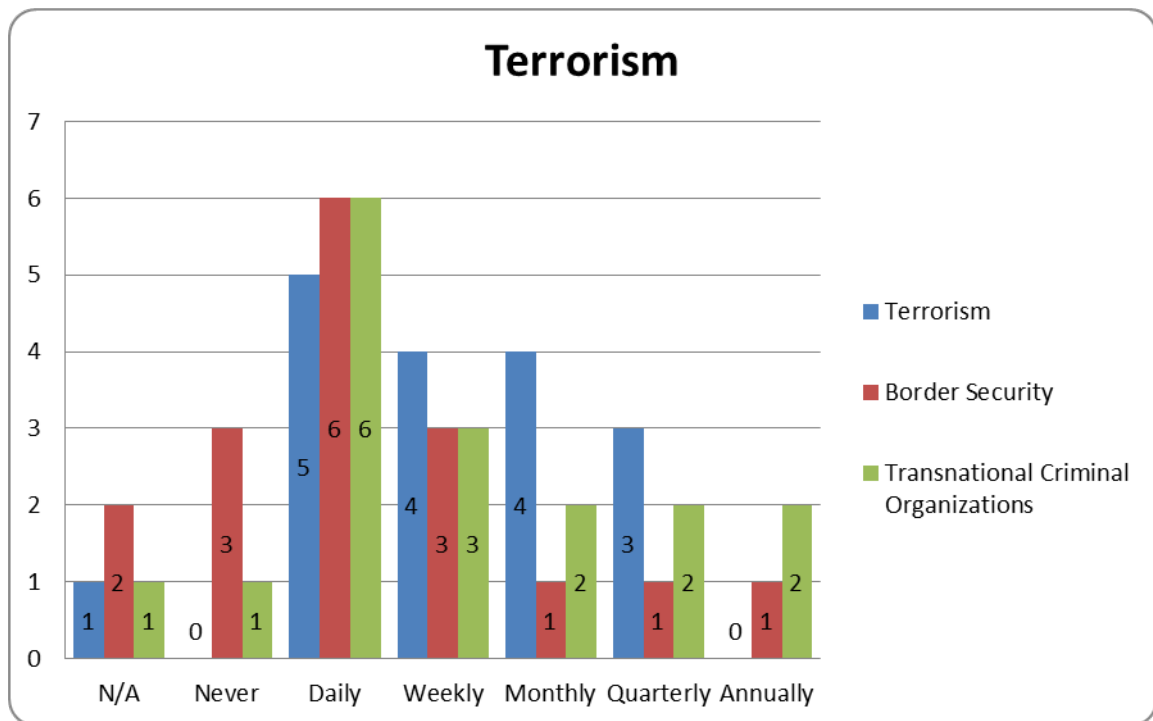
Total Responses: 15

How often do you collaborate with agencies regarding the below primary responsibilities? (Select all that apply)

<u>Scale 1</u>

Question Type: **Choose many**

	N/A	Never	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Quarterly	Annually	Total Responses
Terrorism	1	0	5	4	4	3	0	17
	6%	0%	29%	24%	24%	18%	0%	
Border Security	2	3	6	3	1	1	1	17
	12%	18%	35%	18%	6%	6%	6%	
Transnational Criminal Organizations	1	1	6	3	2	2	2	17
	6%	6%	35%	18%	12%	12%	12%	
Total Responses	**4**	**4**	**17**	**10**	**7**	**6**	**3**	**51**

Terrorism
Response Rate: **100% (N=17)** Question Type: **Choose many**

N/A	**1**
Never	**0**
Daily	**5**
Weekly	**4**
Monthly	**4**
Quarterly	**3**
Annually	**0**
Total Responses	**17**
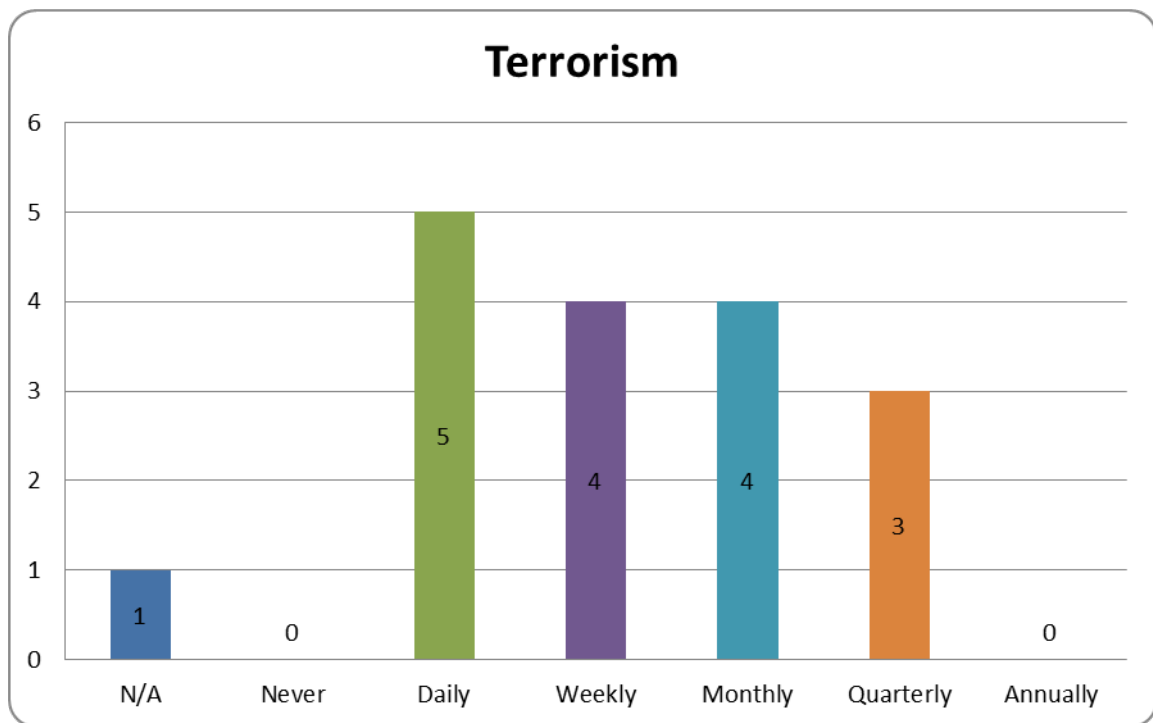
Border Security
Response Rate: **100% (N=17)** Question Type: **Choose many**

N/A	**2**
Never	**3**
Daily	**6**
Weekly	**3**
Monthly	**1**
Quarterly	**1**
Annually	**1**
Total Responses	**17**
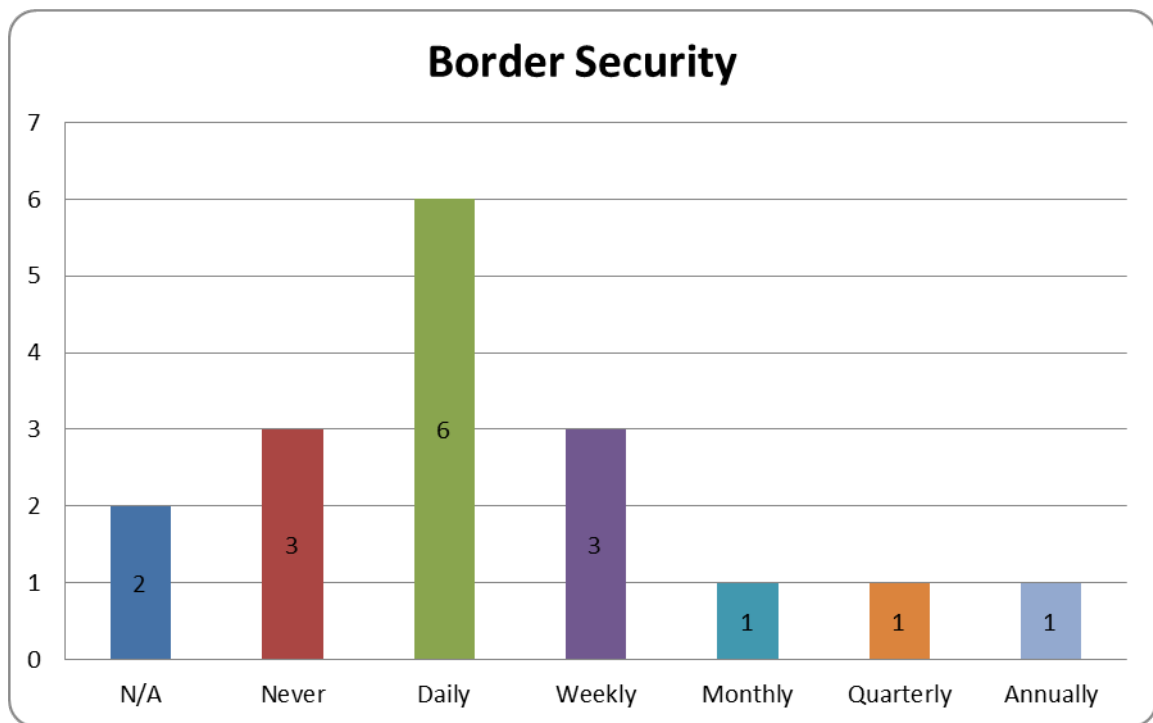
Transnational Criminal Organizations
Response Rate: 100% (N=17) Question Type: **Choose many**

N/A	**1**
Never	**1**
Daily	**6**
Weekly	**3**
Monthly	**2**
Quarterly	**2**
Annually	**2**
Total Responses	**17**
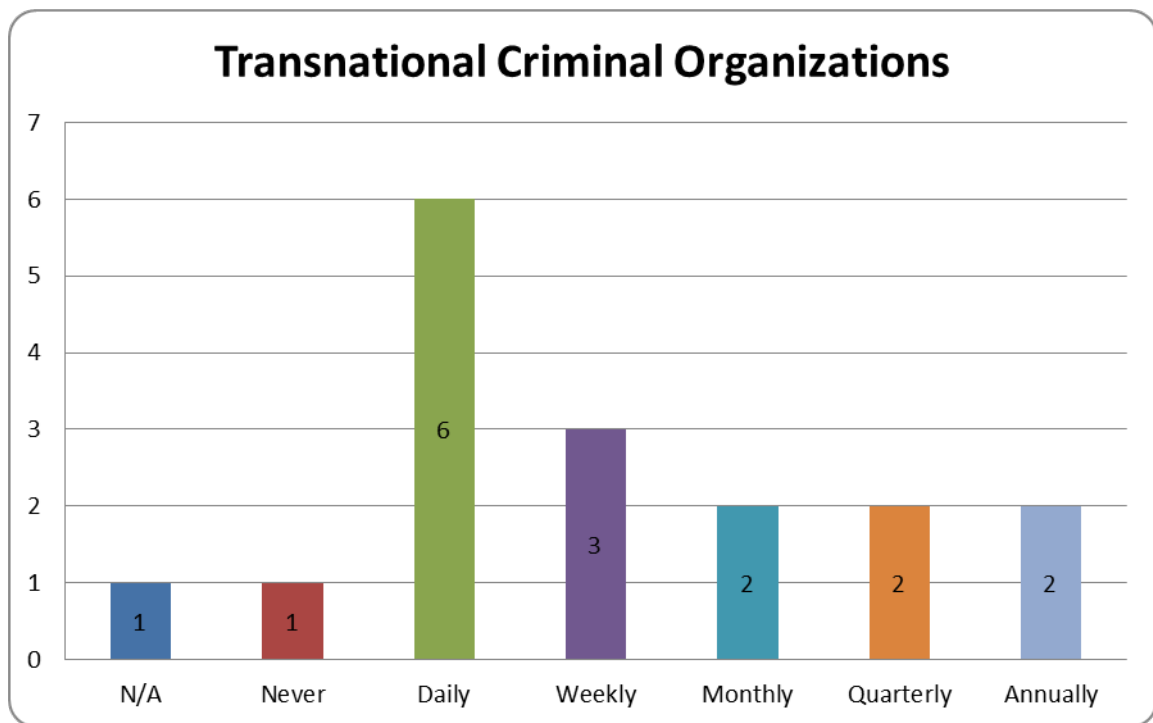
You indicated Intelligence is not shared. Please explain.
Response Rate: 24% (N=4) Question Type: **Paragraph**

| |
|---|
| In my opinion, there is still a culture of holding onto intelligence developed within particular organizations; they developed it...they don't want to share the information or their sources. |
| Largely through bureaucratic friction not all information is shared. |
| It is shared to some degree, but still serious gaps exist. |
| No personal experience here, but I say no because intel sharing can always be better. |

Total Responses: 4

What is the likelihood that terror groups will utilize transnational criminal organizations to facilitate the covert entry of operatives into the US?
Response Rate: **100% (N=17)** Question Type: **Choose one**

Not Very Likely	**1**
Somewhat Likely	**9**
Very Likely	**7**
Total Responses	**17**
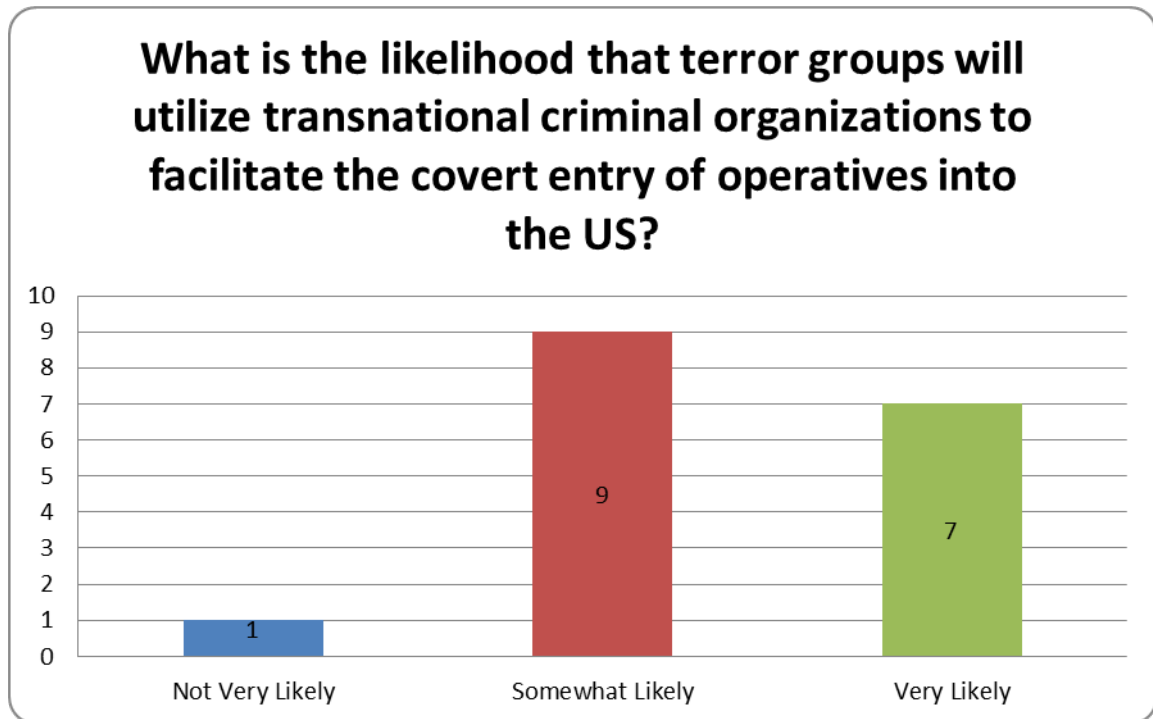
Please explain.
Response Rate: **6% (N=1)** Question Type: **Paragraph**

Most terrorist groups do not trust TCOs, viewing them as motivated not be belief in the ideological cause but by profit, and there is no honor among thieves. TCOs, in general, view terrorists as motivated by wild ideals rather than pragmaic reality, and could very likely engage in violent acts that would be bad for the profits and strategic goals of the TCOs.

Total Responses: 1

How could the possibility of the convergence of transnational criminal organizations and terror groups be mitigated?

Intelligence sharing must continue and border security must be enhanced. The key to the security of the US is a strong well controlled border with minimal to no points of vulnerability. Achievement, of such security is costly and manpower intensive but is the only was to truly secure the country. Strict VISA controls by the State Department are also essential, certain countries regardless of their purported intentions should be forbidden access to the US.

HUMINT sources located within these organizations are the best way...and the most difficult to place and care for. Otherwise, SIGINT, and other technical means are key to this effort.

Increased development of Sources with the opportunity, access, and collaboration.

Increasing border security infrastructure including a continuous high-tech border fence, anti-vehicle measures, and a state of the art ISR package for border security. Increase the employment of DoD assets, including troop units, for border security.

Through multi-national targeting efforts.

Stop the threat before it reaches US soil. Unified, multi-national efforts/partnerships must be used.

Continued surveillance and publicity of law enforcement actions to counter criminal activities may convince terrorist organizations to seek other means to enter the USA in order to conduct acts of terrorism.

Just by always having in the back of our minds during our investigations that the two groups could be linked.

1. informers 2. eavesdropping 3. high profile arrests

The answer to this question depends entirely on context. It is impossible to offer policy or practical recommendations that would work across all contexts - what works among the PKK smugglers along the Turkey-Syria border won't work for the Taliban opium traffickers in Pakistan or the drug cartels in Tijuana.

Counterterrorism Center is doing great work to help prevent terror operatives from entering the U.S. Joint training is an absolute necessity. From a military perspective, understand the linkage and stop treating criminal organizations as if they are okay while terrorism organizations are bad. Target both of the groups instead of just terrorist organizations.

An analysis of intelligence that makes the connections between terror groups and transnational criminal organizations to identify ways in which these groups communicate and launder proceeds from illicit activity in support of terror group goals.

I think that all agencies in the fight against terrorism or transnational criminal organizations need to ensure that they do all that the can at all levels to disrupt or dismantle the organizations. By targeting and attacking the command, operational, logistical and/or financial support elements of both organizations you will weaken the organizations. This will help to prevent the convergence of the organizations and disrupt

any common goals.

Greater foreign presence by DHS/CBP operators and intelligence specialists. Specifically at critical staging areas OCONUS such as the Bahamas, northern Mexican urban areas, European transit hubs (such as Amsterdam and Paris) and Canadian metro areas with easy access to the U.S. northern border (Montreal, Toronto, Vancouver).

Better understanding of information sharing laws between law enforcement and intelligence could help. More community policing to promote trust in officials would be helpful to convince people to report illegal activities that ultimately damage their areas.

That is the dilemma. I think by increasing information sharing between those investigating terrorist organizations and those investing criminal organizations to collaborate strategically where there may be overlap.

Total Responses: 16

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